

**Deterrence and Proportionality in Israeli Military  
Doctrine: The Second Lebanon War**

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Kanan Makiya, Advisor

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# **ABSTRACT**

## Deterrence and Proportionality in Israeli Military Doctrine: The Second Lebanon War

A thesis presented to the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies

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This paper asks whether Israel's strategy of deterrence through disproportionate retaliation is effective in its asymmetrical conflicts against non-state actors. It begins with an analysis of the Israeli strategy of deterrence and retaliation methods against non-state actors, surveying the application of deterrence and retaliation strategies from 1948 through the 1982 Lebanon War. It culminates in an analysis of Israeli involvement in Lebanon, the rise of Hezbollah, and the Second Lebanon War of 2006. The paper finds that Israel has developed an overreliance on military force, which leads it to use it excessively in situations where it is ineffective, such as in asymmetrical conflict. It concludes that not only does the use of excessive force in asymmetrical conflict fail to affect the motivation or capabilities of the non-state adversary which would enforce Israeli deterrence, but it also creates humanitarian catastrophes, which in turn bring about diplomatic isolation and the delegitimization of Israel's struggle against terrorism.

“Waging war when they must, warriors are suspected by the many to have an interest in war as an end in itself. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one doubts the utility of war more than the professional warrior, no one shuns it more actively. ‘Violence rarely settles anything’ are the most memorable words I have ever heard, because they were spoken to me by a former Chief of Defence Staff, our country’s most senior serviceman. Equally, both he and I know that there are some things that, when the threat of violence has failed, can be settled by violence alone.

Violence is the most terrible instrument that the rule of law can take into its use. If we hope to see war driven towards its end, we must not shrink from seeing its causes addressed. Equally, we must not shrink from seeing violence used- nor from according honour to those honourable warriors who administer force in the cause of peace.”

- John Keegan, *War and Our World*

“He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.  
He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.”

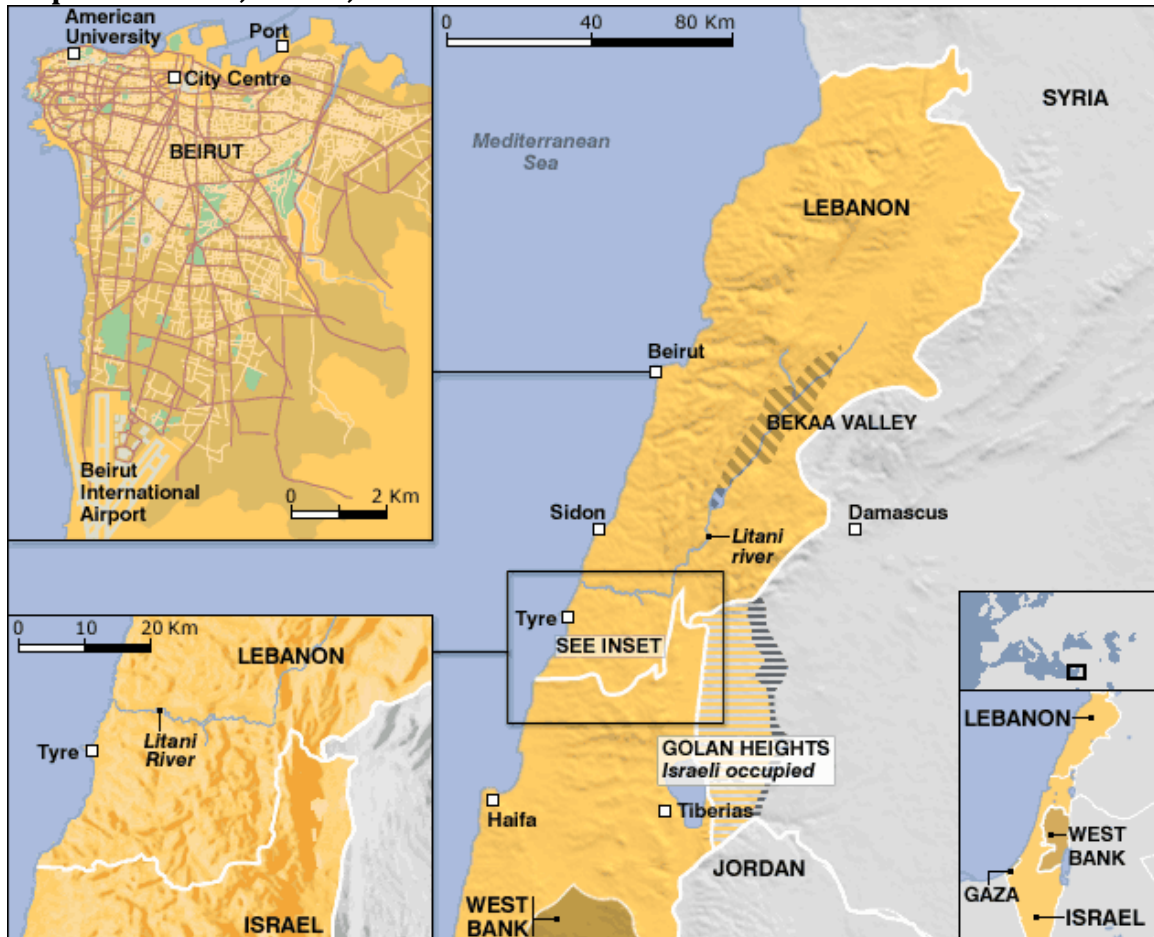
- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <i>MAPS</i>  | vii              |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | <b>1</b>         |
| <b><u>CHAPTER ONE: THE ORIGINS OF DETERRENCE</u></b>                     | <b><u>10</u></b> |
| ISRAEL'S NATIONAL GOALS  | 10               |
| NATIONAL SECURITY ASSUMPTIONS  | 11               |
| THE THEORY OF DETERRENCE AND DISPROPORTIONALITY                          | 18               |
| <b><u>CHAPTER TWO: EARLY USES OF DETERRENCE DISPROPORTIONALITY</u></b>   | <b><u>23</u></b> |
| THE BEGINNING OF LOW-INTENSITY WARFARE                                   | 24               |
| ANTI-ISRAEL GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS                                      | 29               |
| FROM ONE BORDER TO ANOTHER   | 32               |
| <b><u>CHAPTER THREE: DETERRENCE AND RETALIATION IN LEBANON</u></b>       | <b><u>36</u></b> |
| THE RISE OF THE SHIAH IN LEBANON   | 36               |
| ISRAELI INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON AND THE 1982 LEBANON WAR                  | 51               |
| THE RISE OF HEZBOLLAH  | 44               |
| ISRAELI REACTIONS TO HEZBOLLAH, 2000-2006                                | 64               |
| OVERVIEW OF THE SECOND LEBANON WAR                                       | 67               |
| THE DISPROPORTIONATE USE OF FORCE IN THE 2006 WAR                        | 72               |
| <b><u>CHAPTER FOUR: CONSEQUENCES OF DISPROPORTIONATE RETALIATION</u></b> | <b><u>79</u></b> |
| RESULTS OF THE 2006 WAR AND THE FAILURE OF DETERRENCE                    | 79               |
| THE DIPLOMATIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE                | 89               |
| RETALIATION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW   | 92               |
| MORALITY IN WARFARE  | 97               |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b>  | <b>104</b>       |
| <i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>  | 110              |

## MAPS

**Map 1: Lebanon, Beirut, and the Israeli-Lebanese Border**



*Source: "Middle East crisis: Key maps." BBC News.*

*[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/629/629/5177932.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/629/629/5177932.stm)*

**Map 2: Southern Lebanon and the Israeli-Lebanese Border**



*Source: Wikipedia.*

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/10/BlueLine.jpg>.

*Made by Thomas Blomberg, using the UNIFIL map, "Deployment as of July 2006" as reference.*



## Introduction

Born out of warfare, Israel has felt threatened since its establishment in 1948. Israel's creation and survival have been disputed by other countries from the start, and in the 62 years of the country's existence, it has fought six conventional wars against its Arab neighbors while constantly engaging in low-intensity conflict. Consequently, the Jewish state has placed tremendous importance on its national security, relying on its military doctrine to ensure its safety. Israeli military doctrine has always been grounded in the theory of deterrence, a complex strategy which seeks to affect the enemy's cost-benefit analysis in its decision to attack. By diminishing the adversary's motivation for war and capabilities to go to war, deterrence seeks to prevent it from attacking.

The Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1970, and 1973 were traditional conventional wars, primarily fought between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and neighboring Arab states' armies, including those of Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Since the First Lebanon War of 1982, though, Israel has not fought a purely conventional war. However, Israel has engaged in asymmetrical conflicts, fought against entities other than national armies. These conflicts against non-state actors were fought on Israeli-occupied territory such as in the two Palestinian *intifadas*, or

uprisings, as well as outside of Israel, such as in the raids and operations against the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in southern Lebanon in 1982, against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in 2006, and against Hamas in Gaza in 2008-2009.

Asymmetrical warfare is a type of conflict as old as war itself, already studied by Sun Tzu in *The Art of War* in the sixth century BCE. It pits a national army, in this case the IDF, against irregular combatants, insurgents, guerrillas, or terrorists. As opposed to a conventional army, these irregular combatants do not possess classic military force in terms of numbers of warrior, amounts of weapons, or size of military infrastructure. Also, unlike traditional warfare which usually takes place far from civilian areas, asymmetric warfare often takes places amongst civilians. Combatants operate from within cities, buildings, or homes, using civilians as their shields.<sup>1</sup>

This type of warfare is furthermore considered asymmetrical because it is unbalanced from a legal perspective. Because the irregular combatants are not national entities, they do not consider themselves bound by international law relating to the use of the force, to which the national army, on the other hand, is bound. Texts such as the Hague Conventions of 1889 and 1907, and the Geneva Convention of 1949 and its additional protocols of 1977 and 2005 condone states' rights to defend themselves, but also restrict their use of military force in an attempt to protect civilians in a time of war.<sup>2</sup> These texts are founded on the concepts of "discrimination" and "proportionality" in war as parts of *jus in bello*, or justice in

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<sup>1</sup> Samy Cohen, ed. *Democracies at War Against Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2.

<sup>2</sup> For information about the Geneva Conventions, see International Committee of the Red Cross, "The Geneva Conventions of 1949," <http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/genevaconventions>.

war. There is no single definition of proportionality in warfare- and therein lies the difficulty of this paper. Though framed at times vaguely and at time overly specifically by international law, the notions of “proportionality” and “disproportionality” require common sense. The concept of “proportionality” translates into a “reasonable” relation between the irregular enemy’s use of military force and the destruction it caused, and the state’s own military force and its goals.

These rules of war are founded upon the assumption of reciprocity; yet irregular combatants, such as terrorist organizations or militias, neither recognize nor bind themselves to such legal military conventions.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, irregular forces in asymmetric conflicts seek to circumvent the enemy’s conventional military power and their own lack of classic power in different ways. One way they are able to do this is by violating the laws of war by blending in with the local population or targeting the state’s civilian population. Works such as Michael Ignatieff’s *The Lesser Evil*, Samy Cohen’s *Democracies at War Against Terrorism*, Thomas Mockaitis’s *The Phoenix of Counterinsurgency*, and Gil Merom’s *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* are all foundational works on asymmetrical conflict. They use as examples the wars of decolonization, such as the French-Algerian war, the British war against the Irish Republican Army, the “war against terror” in Afghanistan, and the Vietnam War, as

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<sup>3</sup> Customary law, according to the American Law Institute, refers to a “general and consistent practice of states followed by them from a sense of legal obligation.” They are “intended for adherence by states generally and are in fact widely accepted.” For the complete text, please see American Law Institute, *Restatement of the Law, Third, the Foreign Relations Law of the United States* (St. Paul, Minn.: American Law Institute Publishers, 1987) §102(2) and (3). Information about Customary Law can also be found at: Sahl Silke, “Researching Customary International Law, State Practice and the Pronouncements of States regarding International Law,” June/July 2007, [http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/customary\\_international\\_law.htm#\\_What\\_is\\_Customary](http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/customary_international_law.htm#_What_is_Customary).

well as examples of isolated terrorist events to demonstrate the complexity of asymmetric warfare in terms of humanitarian, ethical, and legal problems.

Literature on deterrence, starting with Thomas Schelling's *Arms and Influence* and Patrick Morgan's *Deterrence Now* at its base, is also plentiful. As a concept, deterrence is not new to the art of war, but its strategy was developed by American strategists during the Cold War, making the founding works on the strategy naturally framed within the context of the Cold War and the dawn of the nuclear age. With the rise of non-state actors on the world stage, studies of deterrence vis-à-vis these non-state actors have emerged, but slowly.

Deterrence is the prevalent strategy in Israeli military doctrine. Because the IDF has no official document stating its military doctrine, it is difficult to pinpoint Israeli military strategy. However, through military records, testimonies, autobiographies and other such documents, it is possible to study the history of Israeli national security decisions. In fact, studies of Israeli national security are abundant. Overviews by Yoav Ben-Horin, Ariel Levite, David Rodman, Zeev Maoz, Avner Yaniv, Uri Bar-Joseph, Efraim Karsh, Michael Brecher, and Michael Handel, to name only a few, flesh out the origins and bedrock principles of Israeli military doctrine. These studies tend to be mainly theoretical, or if they do grapple with historical examples, largely confine themselves to the conventional Arab-Israeli wars up through 1973. Efraim Inbar's *Israel's National Security: Issues and Challenges Since the Yom Kippur War* addresses Israeli strategic thinking post-1973, the last conventional war, as it dealt with the *intifadas*, new strategic partners, and possible peace negotiations, but it does not apply the concept of deterrence to the

new post-1973 era. Other works on Israeli deterrence tend to address the potential conflict in the nuclear realm. The rise of Iran as a hypothetical nuclear power in the region has further sparked discussion on the topic of nuclear deterrence. Yair Evron, Shai Feldman, and Avner Cohen are important authors in this domain.

Deterrence is always a key topic in works about Israeli national security, but the concept of proportionality in the use of military force and *jus in bello* is rarely spelled out and discussed in apolitical academic circles, let alone the use of proportionate force in asymmetrical conflict. Yet the military doctrine established and developed by Israel's founding fathers has historically been interpreted as requiring heavy retaliation. In addition, despite the shift from conventional warfare to asymmetric conflict, and despite the shift in Israeli tactics in confronting irregular actors, Israeli military strategy has remained true to its foundations and has not sought to adapt to changing circumstances presented by asymmetrical conflict. In other words, it has failed to realize that non-state actors think and act differently than states do and amend its military strategy accordingly. Some studies, such as Samy Cohen's *Tsahal Contre le Terrorisme* [The IDF Against Terrorism] and Amos Malka's article "Israel and Asymmetrical Deterrence" published in *Comparative Strategy* provide analyses of the IDF's behavior in low-intensity conflict against terrorist organizations, but do not explore specific examples in depth. Cohen's work is one of the few that acknowledges the role that international law, non-governmental organizations, and international public opinion play in the success of Israeli deterrent strategy vis-à-vis non-state actors.

A study of the use of Israeli deterrence strategy and its use of military retaliation vis-à-vis non-state actors is therefore needed to fill the gap in the existing literature. An important launching pad for this thesis was Zeev Drory's *Israel Reprisal Policy: 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliation*. Drory, who served for many years in the IDF, examines the early 1950s, the period in which the policy of reprisal raids occurred the most. His book seeks to divulge the logic behind the seemingly impulsive and erratic raids. This thesis will focus on the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Hezbollah that culminated in the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006 and Israel's use of military force during the war.

Chapters One and Two will open the paper by presenting the origins of Israeli national security doctrine, including the assumptions upon which it was founded. From the beginning, Israel has perceived itself as a victim of quantitative unbalance, manifested in Israel's small size and population compared to its vast and more populous Arab neighbors. Understanding the original and present-day assumptions on which Israeli military decisions are made is crucial so as to not misinterpret the principle of deterrence which is part and parcel of the broader security vision and approach. By cultivating a primarily offensive military doctrine, which at times has slipped into the disproportionate use of force, which Chapter Two will illustrate with specific cases, Israel has sought to build up its deterrence capabilities vis-à-vis its enemies. The chapter will not provide a complete account of non-state actors' operations against Israel or all of Israel's military responses. Nor will it address the events of and the responses to the Palestinian "international" terror campaign, which began in 1968 and included airline hijackings, attacks on

embassies, consulates, stores, Jewish Community Centers, and the killing of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games of 1972.<sup>4</sup> It will also exclude study of the Palestinian *intifadas*, as they do not fit within the framework of this paper. The chapter will only trace the Israeli military response to organized non-state actors' operations against Israeli targets within Israel.

Chapter Three discusses the rise of the Shi'ah as a political force in Lebanon and Israel's response to their attempt to secure more power. Against the backdrop of Lebanon's historical sectarianism, the Civil War of 1975-1990, and the increased Israeli intervention in Lebanese affairs culminating in Operation Peace for the Galilee against the PLO in South Lebanon in 1982, Chapter Three seeks to trace the political radicalization of the Shi'ah and the rise of Hezbollah as the main resistance to the Israeli presence in Lebanon. Robert Norton's *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* provides a detailed history of the Shi'ah community of Lebanon within the sectarianism embedded in Lebanese politics which allowed for the rise of nationalist Shi'ah groups such as Amal and Hezbollah. Eitan Azani's work *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God* is a detailed study of Hezbollah in the Shi'ah, Lebanese, regional, and international arenas. Histories of the two Lebanon wars are numerous. Foundational works pertaining to the 1982 War include *Israel's Lebanon War* by Zeev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, as well as Avner Yaniv's *Dilemmas of Security* which concentrates on the Israeli decision-making process in response to the domestic politics of Lebanon from the Civil War through 1982. Barry Rubin's collection of essays in *Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis* illustrates the complexity of

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<sup>4</sup> More examples of Palestinian terrorist operations can be found in Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims, A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict: 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 378-386.

Lebanon during the Second Lebanon War, while Anthony Cordesman provides an in-depth analysis of IDF conduct during the war. Samir Kassir's *Liban: Un printemps inacheve* [Lebanon: An Unfinished Spring] or Robert Fisk's *Pity the Nation* provide personal accounts of the experience of the Civil War and the 1982 and 2006 wars, bringing to light the human dimension of war.

Chapter Three will also study Israel's fluctuating reactions to Hezbollah's actions since 1982 and culminating the 2006 Lebanon War. Shlomo Brom and Meir Elran from the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)'s compilation of essays analyzing the various dimensions of the war explain the reasons for the outbreak of the war from an Israeli perspective. Unintentionally complementing their work, Daniel Sobelman's *New Rules of the Game* explores the careful, living dynamics of the Israeli-Hezbollah relation which failed, as Hezbollah failed to anticipate Israel's violent response to its provocations in June 2006. Another compilation edited by Clive Jones and Sergio Catignani focuses on the role of asymmetry in the Hezbollah-Israeli conflict. The chapter will discuss the successes and failures of the use of heavy military retaliation in Lebanon.

The concluding chapter will evaluate the consequences of the use of heavy military retaliation as a strategy of deterrence in the 2006 War. Using United Nations conventions, legal essays, newspaper articles, and non-profit organizations' reports, the chapter will consider the ethical, legal, and diplomatic ramifications of such use of force. The use of military force is complicated and raises important questions: Do the ends justify the means? Do short-term goals trump long-term goals, or morality in warfare? How much choice to military leaders have in war?



Particularly important sources for this chapter include Michael Ignatieff's *The Lesser Evil*, which asks the ethical question "Can a liberal democracy fight terrorism without destroying the values for which it stands?" and Michael Walzer's works on just war theory. While the question of the success of Israel's use of force is open to debate, the chapter will argue that the use of heavy military retaliation not only fails to restore complete deterrence because it fails to address the root cause of terrorism, but because the unavoidable humanitarian crises it causes turn the local population, the government, and the international community against Israel, and delegitimize Israel's struggle against terrorism. Thus, Israel's use of excessive force against non-state actors is, in the long-term, counter-productive.

## Chapter One: The Origins of Deterrence

### Israel's National Goals

Once Israel was created in May 1948, its immediate goal was the physical security of its land and population, while its long-term goal was the establishment of peaceful and normal relations with the neighboring Arab states.<sup>5</sup> However, the creation of the Jewish state was met with opposition from its neighbors. In his book *Defense and Diplomacy in Israel's National Security Experience*, which provides a comprehensive analysis of Israeli security doctrine, David Rodman writes that “[Israel] is probably the only state in the international system whose most basic right- its right to survive- has traditionally been disputed by its enemies.”<sup>6</sup> The day after the state was declared, the first of five Israeli-Arab wars broke out.

There is no precise codification of Israeli national security strategy, which Professor at Bar-Ilan University Stuart Cohen argues has allowed Israel to be pragmatic and flexible on the one hand, but on the other hand, has prevented the regular review of a cohesively formulated national security doctrine.<sup>7</sup> A state's

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<sup>5</sup> Bard E. O'Neill, “Israel” in Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti, *The Defensive Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 504.

<sup>6</sup> David Rodman, *Defense and Diplomacy in Israel's National Security Experience* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Stuart Cohen, “David Rodman's ‘Israel's National Security Doctrine’: Some Suggested Modifications,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 2001): 128.

military doctrine is the amalgamation of assumptions, assessments, beliefs, guidelines, and oral and written decisions.<sup>8</sup> The basis of Israeli national strategy, which is still valid today according to many Israeli strategists, was established by David Ben-Gurion in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It is, according to former Major General of the IDF Israel Tal, “[Israel’s] basic and permanent plan for preparedness, deployment, and war in the defense of the national existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people.”<sup>9</sup> Tal explains that Israel’s national security strategy, military goals, and military strategy are all interconnected.<sup>10</sup> Israeli national security doctrine is based upon a set of assumptions about itself, the surrounding Arab states, and the international community. The following assumptions determined Israel’s perception of the threats, constraints, and goals it faced.

### **National Security Assumptions**

Israel’s first assumption was that it was at a quantitative disadvantage compared to its neighbors, perceiving itself in a default situation of “the few against the many.”<sup>11</sup> This quantitative asymmetry manifested itself most notably in terms of geography and population. Though victorious in its 1947-1949 War of Independence, Israel remained a long, flat, and low territory with no strategic depth. At its widest waist in the north and in the Negev desert, its width extended only a few dozen miles, and all major population centers, industrial centers, and military

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<sup>8</sup> Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense in Israeli Military Doctrine* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 10.

<sup>9</sup> Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 42.

<sup>10</sup> For a fuller articulation of the intricate relations between Israel’s national goals, security strategy, and military aims, see Israel Tal, *National Security: The Israeli Experience* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Tal, 41.

bases were within easy reach of its much vaster Arab enemies.<sup>12</sup> Moshe Dayan, the fourth IDF Chief of Staff and later Defense Minister and Foreign Minister, wrote, “The entire country is a frontier” because it was so small.<sup>13</sup> In addition, with scarce natural resources, little water, and a desert climate spanning half its territory, Israel possessed little resources to support the country’s defense budget in the case of long wars, unlike the Arab countries.

In terms of population, Israel again saw itself at a disadvantage in comparison to the Arab states. In 1948, Israel’s Jewish population of 600,000-650,000 was no match for the Arab states’ combined population of 32.3 million. Israel assumed that because of their demographic superiority, the Arab countries could not only maintain a larger military budget, but also maintain larger professional armies. Israel, on the contrary, could not afford to sustain a fully mobilized army at the country’s economic development’s expense.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, attritional warfare, in contrast to the Arab states that could afford it, would exhaust Israel’s economic and military resources and manpower. Furthermore, Israel feared that because the Arab countries were populous, they could switch suddenly from peacetime to war, taking advantage of the fact that Israel’s small standing army would have to wait for the reserves to mobilize in order to be able to fight back effectively.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Rodman, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 66.

<sup>14</sup> Rodman, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen, *Israel’s Strategic Doctrine* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1981), 4.

Thus, the first major assumption in Israeli national security doctrine is that Israel is a victim of quantitative asymmetry- that its enemies are naturally larger and more powerful than it. Revisionist historian Avi Shlaim, in his book *The Iron Wall*, refutes parts of this traditional narrative of “the few against the many.” For example, his research demonstrates that by mid-May 1948, the Arab (irregular and regular) forces numbered fewer than 25,000, whereas the newly formed IDF troops numbered more than 35,000, and by December 1948 numbered more than 96,000. He argues, therefore, that throughout the war, Israeli troops actually outnumbered the Arab troops, even by a two-to-one ratio at the end of it. Shlaim does not dismiss the traditional narrative as fictitious, but he explains: “This version is largely based on the historical facts, but it is a selective and subjective interpretation of these facts. It is precisely because this version corresponds so closely to the personal experience and perceptions of the Israelis who lived through the 1948 war that it has proved so resistant to revision and change.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, no matter the actual statistics, the Israeli leadership assumed itself to be weaker and smaller than its enemies, and this assumption shaped the national security strategy that it would form.

A second assumption that influenced the shaping of national security strategy was that Israel was constantly under existential threat from the Arab states. Despite the Israeli victory in the 1948 War, Ben-Gurion anticipated- correctly- that following the Arab countries’ humiliating defeat, more rounds of fighting would continue and that the Arabs would be better prepared and more motivated than

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<sup>16</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arabs since 1948* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 33.

before.<sup>17</sup> A week before the pan-Arab invasion of 1948, Azzam Pasha, the Arab League's secretary general, stated: "It does not matter how many Jews there are. We will sweep them into the sea."<sup>18</sup> In reality, the Arab camp during the first Israeli-Arab war was unprepared and uncoordinated. The Arab armies had no common political or military goal, and no agreed operational timetable.<sup>19</sup>

The 1948 War broke out when on May 15, the Egyptian, Transjordanian, Syrian, Lebanese, and Iraqi armies, alongside Palestinian militias invaded the newly declared state. After Israel achieved victory with the ceasefire of January 7, 1949, it sought to sign individual armistice treaties with each of the belligerent Arab states under the auspices of the UN. Israel secured agreements first with Egypt in February, with Lebanon in March, with Jordan in April, and with Syria in July. At that point, Israel became a status quo player.<sup>20</sup> History professor at Ben-Gurion University Benny Morris argues that the Arab states viewed the armistice accords as short-term agreements, and certainly not any form of long-term peace treaties.<sup>21</sup> Zeev Maoz, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at UC Davis, explains that Israel similarly assumed that "the Arab world [was] fundamentally hostile toward Israel. It would attempt to destroy the Jewish state given the right chance."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the Israeli leadership upheld that the Arab states would only accept Israel after despairing of ever destroying the Jewish state by force.<sup>23</sup> Ben-Gurion had

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<sup>17</sup> Zeev Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (NY: Vintage Books, 2001), 219.

<sup>19</sup> Morris, 219.

<sup>20</sup> Morris, 251.

<sup>21</sup> Morris, 252.

<sup>22</sup> Maoz, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Tal, 42.

elaborated this theory already in 1936 in a letter to the Jewish Agency Executive, writing: "For only after total despair on the part of the Arabs, despair that will come not only from the failure of the disturbances and the attempt at rebellion, but also as a consequence of our growth in the country, may the Arabs possibly acquiesce in a Jewish Eretz Israel."<sup>24</sup> Therefore, until the time came when the Arab states would accept Israel as an unchallengeable fact, Israeli national security doctrine had to provide a strategy that would allow Israel to survive repeated attacks.

The third assumption upon which Israeli national security doctrine was founded was Israel's inability to rely on the international community for its protection and survival. Maoz explains that the experience of Jewish persecution culminating in the Holocaust, from the Israeli perspective, proved that the Jews could not rely on any body but themselves to secure their existence. Tal corroborates that hostility towards Jews, whether derived from anti-Semitism or national interest, directly influenced the shaping and development of Israel's national security doctrine.<sup>25</sup> Israelis perceived themselves as "a people that dwells alone," singularly and entirely responsible unto themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, Israeli national security doctrine sought to remedy these assumptions by elaborating a strategy that would circumvent or compensate for the disadvantages at which Israel perceived itself. Firstly, in compensation for its assumed quantitative inferiority in terms of territory, Israeli military doctrine prompted emphasis on retaliation and carrying the battle to the enemy's territory,

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<sup>24</sup> Shlaim, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Tal, 39.

<sup>26</sup> Maoz, 9.

so as to not damage its own infrastructure and land.<sup>27</sup> In order to compensate for its demographic inferiority, Israel developed, after the Swiss model, an army of professional soldiers supported by a pool of trained reservists who would undergo compulsory and regular military training. Accordingly, Rodman reports that Israel jokingly coined itself a “nation in arms,” a nation of soldiers on leave 11 months out of the year.<sup>28</sup> In addition to transplanting the war to enemy territory in order to salvage its own, Israel sought to wage short wars, which would cost less money and arms, cause fewer fatalities, and disrupt the civil economy as least as possible.

In response to feeling under perpetual threat, Israeli security doctrine was formulated according to the worst possible scenario. It sought to balance the quantitative asymmetry it perceived by striving to be technologically and qualitatively superior than the Arab armies. The IDF prides itself on the fact that it is self-reliant: it has never eagerly sought foreign help or guidance in the areas of manpower, training, and doctrine. Subject to vigorous training, the IDF’s manpower has always been more fit, more educated and more motivated than its Arab counterpart.<sup>29</sup> Its military arsenal has also surpassed that of the Arab countries. Prior to 1967, it had produced combat aircraft, naval vessels, ammunition, small arms, missiles, and electronics, as well as the alleged nuclear bomb. After the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the arms industry boomed, putting forth space-borne systems,

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<sup>27</sup> Ben-Horin and Posen, 29.

<sup>28</sup> Rodman, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Rodman, 11.



ballistics missiles, anti-ballistic missile systems, Precision Guided Munitions (PGM), fighting vehicles, and aircraft.<sup>30</sup>

Even though Israel believed that the international community could not be relied upon to ensure Israel's physical security, its leaders did understand the benefit of cultivating strategic alliances, notably with world powers. Ben-Gurion believed that though support could not guarantee Israel's physical security, it would definitely enhance it.<sup>31</sup> Except for the first war in 1948, Israel has received military and financial assistance in every Arab-Israeli war. It secured aid from the USSR (through Czechoslovakia) from 1947 to 1949, France from 1955 to 1968, West Germany from 1953 to 1967, and after 1967, mostly from the United States.<sup>32</sup> Complying with the dictum "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," Israel also sought to forge an "alliance of the periphery" with the non-Arab states of Turkey and Iran, and regional minorities such as the Kurds of Iraq, the Africans of Sudan, and the Christians of Lebanon. Thus, Israeli national security doctrine was compiled as a collective response to the situation of threat and disadvantages that Israel perceived. Because Israel constantly felt threatened, the IDF constantly perceived its actions as defensive, even when its military operations became offensive.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Rodman, 19.

<sup>31</sup> Levite, 29.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Handel, "Evolution of Israeli Strategy," in ed. W. Murray, M. Knox, A. Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 549.

<sup>33</sup> Zeev Drory, *Israel's Reprisal Policy: 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliation* (UK: Frank Cass, 2005), 7.

## **The Theory of Deterrence and Disproportionality**

A fundamental tenant of Israeli national security doctrine is deterrence. Deterrence theory, as it has been introduced, was developed during the Cold War to help states cope with the bipolar and potential nuclear conflict. Deterrence theory therefore leans heavily on the experiences of nuclear threat and the balancing of two superpowers of quasi-equal tremendous capabilities.<sup>34</sup> In the Israeli-Arab context, this framework involving nuclear powers of similar capabilities is inapplicable.<sup>35</sup> Instead, this paper will analyze deterrence in a completely different framework- that of asymmetrical warfare pitting a conventional national army (the IDF) against non-state guerrilla or militia organizations, such as the PLO and most relevant here, Hezbollah.

The IDF has not developed its own official theory of deterrence, but uses the Cold War terms of it in many aspects. Many of the terms in the academic political literature in the 1950s such as “pre-emptive strike,” “deterrence,” or “compellence” were widely translated and used in the Middle East. In Israel, the political and military strategists developed and nuanced these terms in relation to Israel.<sup>36</sup> Military force, the IDF understood, was not enough to guarantee its survival and security. Deterrence acts upon not only the abilities (military might) of the enemy, but its motivation, or desire to go to war. Therefore, preferring to deter its enemies than having to actually fight them, Israeli national security doctrine, according to Uri

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<sup>34</sup> Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8.

<sup>35</sup> The conflict is not a nuclear conflict because Israel has not declared its nuclear capabilities and Israel’s asymmetrical adversaries are non-nuclear. Therefore, the conflict cannot be analyzed through the prism of nuclear conflict, which revolves around the possibility of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).

<sup>36</sup> Drory, 8.

Bar-Joseph, professor of international relations at Haifa University, has relied on several types of deterrence which act upon the enemy's perception (disregarding the reality) of Israel's military power. Even in peacetime, the IDF's goal is to maintain a strong posture of deterrence vis-à-vis its enemies.

Israel creates deterrence by setting "red lines" whose crossing of by the enemy is just cause for war. The "red lines" include a dangerous concentration of Arab forces, hostile acts meant to lure Israel into a war of attrition (such as terrorism, firing on settlements, harassment), and the threat of a full-scale war.<sup>37</sup> Israel warns that it will preempt, or strike first, in the face of such an imminent threat. According to this "general deterrence," the goal of deterrence is for the enemy to undergo a learning process about what these red lines are and how much Israel will respond to the enemy's violation of them. Israel also uses "specific deterrence," issuing warnings to specific actors who are threatening to Israel. Both types of deterrence are meant to build up an aura of power of the country in order to "ensure that thinking about an attack never goes very far," explains Patrick Morgan, expert on national and international security matters, including deterrence.<sup>38</sup>

The other two forms of deterrence that Israeli national security relies on are "deterrence by denial" and "deterrence by punishment." The former aims to successfully prevent the adversary from achieving its goals, such as obtaining and launching rockets or attacking military bases. Deterrence by denial, therefore, attempts to prevent the possibility of war at all. Morgan writes: "Prevention was to

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<sup>37</sup> Tal, 55.

<sup>38</sup> Morgan, 80.

be achieved via manipulating the opponent's thinking, making deterrence a *psychological* relationship."<sup>39</sup> Contrastingly, deterrence by punishment involves inflicting heavy costs on the adversary when it does decide to attack, so that it will hesitate to attack again in the future. The aim of a policy of punishment is for the military to take punitive measures so as to clarify to the adversary that continuing its actions is more damaging than beneficial and therefore compel it to cease its attacks.<sup>40</sup> Inflicting heavy punishment on a belligerent adversary can humiliate the enemy as well as increase its and other enemies' perceptions of the costs and risks of attacking Israel.

Since deterrence is a strategy attempting to alter the adversary's cost-benefit analysis and convince it to not attack by way of threats, it is crucial for the actor to establish credibility vis-à-vis its enemy. The deterrer must convince its adversary that it has both the capabilities to inflict heavy punishment as well as the motivation to do so. "What deterred was not the threat, but that it was believed," writes Morgan. Whether or not the actor has the capability or motivation to carry out its threat is irrelevant. With regard to Israel, Tal writes: "The deterrent effect of the IDF is enhanced not only by victory in full-scale wars but by operations between wars, operations that are part of Israel's ongoing defense activities."<sup>41</sup> These operations include commando raids, painful reprisal raids, and demonstrations of military superiority, intended to prove Israel's capacity to punish, and its will to do so.

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<sup>39</sup> Morgan, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Drory, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Tal, 52.

An important element of deterrence theory is the assumption of both parties' rationality. Deterrence theory assumes that the actors exhibit rational thinking when weighing the costs and benefits of realizing the idea of a belligerent attack and the threatened consequences.

Israel's national security doctrine arose out of the realization that Israel could not change or even maintain the status quo by force. Because Israel believed that the same could not be said for the Arab countries, the IDF concentrated on deterring the Arab countries from threatening or launching attacks against Israel. Ariel Levite writes that "deterrence has not only become the centerpiece of Israeli policy versus the Arabs, but Israeli policymakers have consistently attached to it critical security importance in redressing Israel's strategic vulnerability."<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the years, the IDF has remained faithful to the doctrine of deterrence, and in the case of its failure, to offensive warfare. In fact, former IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon held strongly to the deterrence tradition in current military doctrine. He recently stated, "We must make it clear that we have the ability to respond forcefully to every attempt to use terror against us, and that we will not hesitate to do so [...] In this context, we must cling to the principle that the best defense is offense."<sup>43</sup> The centrality of deterrence in Israel's national security doctrine had deeply affected the IDF's outlook and reasoning. Because of the determination of the state to restore its deterrence posture and prove its ability and desire to inflict punishment on a belligerent adversary, it may use the strategy of disproportionate

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<sup>42</sup> Levite, 47.

<sup>43</sup> Gil Ronen, "Minister Yaalon: Best Defense is Offense," *Arutz Sheva* (17 February 2010) <IsraelNationalNews.com>.

force. The following chapter will demonstrate how the culture of offensive defense in Israeli national security, and especially the emphasis on deterrence by punishment has slipped into a habit of excessive retaliation.

## Chapter Two: Early Uses of Deterrence Through Disproportionality

Israel's perception of itself as a small and naturally weak nation surrounded by much larger and potentially more powerful enemies led Israeli leaders to elaborate a military doctrine that they claimed to be defensive in nature, but quick to become offensive under threat. Israel has no constitution, no formal definition of the decision-making process in matters of national security, and no national security council. In order to make national security decisions, the prime minister and his cabinet therefore rely primarily on the Chief of Staff, the IDF, and the intelligence community for information and analysis of security issues. Michael Handel, expert on military strategy and professor of naval strategy at the U.S. Naval War College, adds, "Israel's early military weaknesses and subsequent military strength gave rise to a [national security] strategy dominated by military considerations."<sup>44</sup> The lack of an official structure in the decision-making process allows military strategy to be adaptable to varying circumstances, but it also means it is less subject to control and review. Israeli military strategy has remained true to its foundations, relying on the demonstration of military might to maintain deterrence vis-à-vis both other states and non-state actors engaged in low-intensity warfare against it.

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<sup>44</sup> Handel, in ed. Murray, Knox, and Bernstein, 575.

## The Beginning of Low-Intensity Warfare

Low-intensity warfare began immediately following the end of the 1948 War, mainly in the form of infiltration and border clashes. Over the course of the war, 700,000 Palestinians were displaced to neighboring Arab countries or the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>45</sup> Palestinian refugees sought to infiltrate back across the armistice borders into Israel for various reasons: some were *fedayeen*, or self-sacrificers, aiming to carry out terrorist actions or take revenge on Israelis; some sought to recover their possessions in their former homes or tend to their land; some hoped to resettle on their lost land or visit relatives; some were thieves and smugglers; and other still were Bedouins bringing their livestock to graze on greener grass.<sup>46</sup> About 10,000-15,000 incidents took place annually between 1949 and 1954, and Morris claims that far less than 10 percent of the infiltrators came with the express purpose of attacking Israeli targets. Still, between 1951 and 1955, infiltrators killed around 300 Israelis. In addition, infiltration caused Israel direct and indirect financial damage in the form of stolen property and the need for an increase in civilian guards. Thus, naturally, a situation of physical insecurity, demoralization, and economic loss pervaded along the border settlements.<sup>47</sup>

Zeev Drory analyzes that periods of continuous armed conflict tend to increase the resort to the use of violence. Indeed, though the bulk of Israeli effort was initially devoted to defensive measures to protect the border settlements from

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<sup>45</sup> Morris, 252.

<sup>46</sup> Shlaim, 78.

<sup>47</sup> Morris, 270-271.



infiltrators, the Israeli response to these infiltrations became primarily military.<sup>48</sup> When Moshe Dayan became Chief of Staff at the end of 1953, he developed an offensive military spirit, arguing that: “These are not isolated incidents that stem from personal motives, but rather an organized act, committed with the knowledge of Arab states, and as a result of Egyptian initiative.”<sup>49</sup> According to Michael Handel, his motto was therefore, “When in doubt, always attack.” The IDF ordered front-line units along the borders to shoot at anything moving at night, and at every adult male during the daytime. Mines and booby traps were laid, and added to the shootings, killed up to 5,000 infiltrators every year between 1949 and 1956.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the mines, booby traps, and shootings, the IDF adopted a tit-for-tat strategy of reprisal raids (in Hebrew “*peulot tagmul*”) against the villages sheltering the infiltrators.<sup>51</sup> The reprisals were usually cross-border raids carried out by small units of infantrymen. The declared objective of retaliation was to break the chain of violence through a conclusive military operation on the other side of the border. According to Morris, these retaliatory strikes had three purposes: revenge, punishment, and deterrence. The operations were seen as direct responses to the infiltrations’ damage. Dayan contended that the retaliatory raids were necessary to embarrass the Arab national armies so as to compel them to stop the infiltrators on their side of the border. “Moreover,” writes Morris, “the strikes sent out a message of strategic deterrence to the Arab states. They demonstrated, for all to see, that the

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<sup>48</sup> Drory, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Maoz, 49.

<sup>50</sup> Morris, 274.

<sup>51</sup> For a complete examination of retaliatory actions, Israeli leaders’ attitudes towards retaliation, and the determination of military and political policy in the 1950s, see Zeev Drory, *Israel’s Reprisal Policy: 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliation* (UK: Frank Cass, 2005).

IDF was far more powerful and efficient than any of the Arab armies, thus pushing back the day-and possibility- of a 'second round'."<sup>52</sup>

These raids exhibited a habit of excessive, or disproportionate, retaliation that the IDF developed in low-intensity conflict. Retaliatory raids were carried out against Syrian, Egyptian, Lebanese and Jordanian military, but also civilian, targets.<sup>53</sup> Moshe Dayan's policy of retaliation raids reached an apogee during a raid on the village of Qibya on October 14, 1953 following the killing of an Israeli mother and her two children. The raid, carried out by the famous Unit 101 under Major Ariel Sharon, left 60 villagers, mostly women and children, dead in the rubble of demolished buildings. Following international outcry, the IDF gave the order to only target military targets, systemically sparing women and children.<sup>54</sup> Swift reprisals would henceforth be aimed at specific military targets of the host country, such as military camps, police posts, military bases etc. The aim was to carry out painful strikes that would compel the host country to curb infiltrations into Israel.<sup>55</sup>

While the number of civilian casualties decreased, the intensity of the following raids increased. Dayan explained in a 1955 article: "The retaliation raids are designed to set a [high] price for our blood, [a price] that no Arab village, army, or government would feel was worth paying."<sup>56</sup> During the tensions leading up to the 1956 Suez War between Egypt and Israel, the Israeli army continued to carry out raids in response to *fedayeen* attacks. Despite the official order to spare civilians,

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<sup>52</sup> Morris, 276.

<sup>53</sup> Morris, 287.

<sup>54</sup> Samy Cohen, *Tsahal a l'epreuve du terrorisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2009), 64.

<sup>55</sup> Drory, 45.

<sup>56</sup> Maoz, 274.

“activist,” or hawkish, habits were well instilled within the IDF and intentionally targeting civilians was not unheard of. On October 29, 1956, on the eve of the Sinai Campaign, Colonel Isaachar Shadmi gave the order to his Magav unit to shoot anyone caught violating curfew in the triangle region in the south of the Galilee near the Jordanian border. When asked by soldiers how to deal with women and children, Shadmi replied, “No feelings.”<sup>57</sup> The unit carried out a raid in broad daylight, killing 49 civilians returning from work at 5pm who were unaware of the curfew.<sup>58</sup> This event is known as the “Kfar Kassem massacre.” The Kfar Kassem massacre, though not a retaliatory raid, demonstrates the climate of indifference with regard to civilian life which was present in the IDF’s anti-terrorist operations.<sup>59</sup>

The disproportionate retaliations carried out by the IDF were not effective in the long run, though in the short term they could postpone security threats. They rarely deterred the infiltrators for long, failing to act upon the motivation of the Arab host states to curb the infiltrations and the infiltrators themselves. They also caused negative diplomatic and military repercussions for Israel. Following raids in 1953, Jordan tried to invoke its defense agreement with Britain. Following the Qibya raid, the United Nations (UN) condemned Israel’s actions, the United States suspended \$26 million of economic aid to Israel in protest, and France and Great Britain demanded sanctions to be taken against those responsible for the raid.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Samy Cohen, 68.

<sup>58</sup> Samy Cohen, 67.

<sup>59</sup> Samy Cohen, 69.

<sup>60</sup> Samy Cohen, 64; Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 107.

The Suez War provided Israel with a decade of calm with practically no infiltrations until 1967, as Egypt and Jordan decide to tightly control their borders and prevent infiltrations. Yet national security doctrine still perceived Israel as under imminent threat, so Israel pursued a policy of deterrence. Indeed, Israel was concerned by the fact that for the first time, an official Arab League document called for the destruction of Israel: "The establishment of Israel is the basic threat that the Arab nation in its entirety had agreed to forestall [...] Collective Arab military preparation, when they are completed, will constitute the ultimate practical means for the final liquidation of the Israel."<sup>61</sup> Foreign Minister Abba Eban wrote in his memoirs: "In the 1960s Israel's security doctrine was rooted in the idea of an independent deterrent power [...] I believed that our strategy towards the Arab world would have to have an attritional state. First they would have to be driven to despair of causing our downfall and liquidation. At that state they would perhaps see the advantage and compulsion of 'doing a deal' [...] Our immediate task was to maintain a sufficient deterrent balance to bring the Arab states, or at least some elements in their leadership, to a realistic preference for compromise."<sup>62</sup>

On November 13, 1966, the IDF carried out a raid against the village of Samu, three miles north of the Israeli border in the West Bank. At dawn, 4,000 Israeli troops in Jeeps, personnel carriers, and five tanks rolled across the border. Forty-six houses were blown up and the local mosque was reduced the rubble.<sup>63</sup> Dozens of

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<sup>61</sup> Shlaim, 229.

<sup>62</sup> Shlaim, 225-226.

<sup>63</sup> "Middle East: Incident at Samu," *Time* (25 November 1966)  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,843082,00.html#ixzz0c1lwqMPn>.

Jordanian soldiers who came to the rescue were killed.<sup>64</sup> The raid infuriated and embarrassed the Hashemite Kingdom who had been trying to curb infiltrations to Israel and was leading its own struggle against the PLO and not in need of Israeli military reprisals. Following the Samu raid, Jordan feared that Israel secretly planned on invading the West Bank. Furthermore, Palestinian nationalism exploded in the Jordanian-controlled West Bank. Both these factors forced King Hussein to go along with Nasser's pan-Arab sweeping rhetoric.<sup>65</sup> Hussein pleaded Nasser to accept Jordan as an ally in arms. The Samu raid demonstrated that the excessive use of force can turn the host nation against the deterrer if the host nation feels threatened- even if the deterrer's attacks are not directed towards the nation itself. Deterrence is a delicate psychological balance, but if one state feels threatened, then an arms race and escalation is inevitable.

### **Anti-Israel Guerrilla Organizations**

Following the 1967 War, anti-Israel guerrilla organization proliferated. They included, for instance, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) established in December 1967 by George Habash, or the Saika group emerging in September 1967. These and other Palestinian groups mostly operated under the umbrella of the PLO (which had previously been established in September 1964 under the auspices of the Arab League following the second Arab Summit

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<sup>64</sup> Shlaim, 229.

<sup>65</sup> Moshe Shemesh, "The IDF Raid on Samu': The Turning Point in Jordan's Relations with Israel and the West Bank Palestinians," *Israel Studies* 7, No. 1, 160.

conferences in 1964 and led by the first chairman, Ahmed Shuqayri.)<sup>66</sup> Its military branch, the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA), complemented it. For the Palestinians, the defeat of Syria, Egypt, and Jordan in the 1967 War had proved to them that they would have to assume the responsibility of reclaiming their homeland. Indeed, in 1968, the PLO reorganized under Yassir Arafat and redrafted the Palestinian National Covenant (or Charter) by adding and modifying some of the clauses from the 1964 version. The 1964 version had been entitled *Al-Mithaq al-Aawmi al-Filastini*, translated as “The Palestinian National [meaning Pan-Arab] Charter” because the adjective “*qawmi*” bears the meaning of Pan-Arabism.<sup>67</sup> Palestine, here, is a national homeland part of a greater Arab land. In July 1968 at the Fourth Palestinian National Assembly, the new title of *al-mithaq al-watani al-filastini* was given to the charter, meaning “The Palestinian National Charter,” using the word “*watan*”, or homeland, and this losing the reference to a greater Arab national identity. In this version of the charter, pan-Arabism, which had been the dominant theme in the original document, became subordinate to the concept of Palestinian nationalism.

While the PLO increased its recruits and popular militias organized in Amman and other urban centers, the Israeli army repeatedly shelled *fedayeen* hideouts. According to Bard O’Neill, “in many cases, the actions of the IDF were in line with the offensive orientation that marked its conventional warfare doctrine

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<sup>66</sup> Shlaim, 238.

<sup>67</sup> Philipp Holtmann, *The PLO Charters of 1964 ad 1968 and the Hamas Charter: A Comparative Study* (Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2009), 10.

and operations,” consisting of violent search-and-destroy operations and air attacks.<sup>68</sup>

The largest Israel assault ever against the guerrillas took place in March 1968 in Jordan after an Israeli school bus was blown up by a mine near the settlement of Be'er Ora in the Arava region, killing two adults and wounding ten children. Three days later, the IDF and IAF targeted a complex of Fatah bases in the Jordan Valley and in and around the village of Karameh. Hundreds of civilians lived in the village, along with about 900 lightly armed guerrillas. The battle that ensued involved not only the PLO, but also the (Jordanian) Arab Legion's forces. The Karameh raid was a near-catastrophe for the IDF due to poor intelligence and unforeseen weather conditions on the ground, so it followed its order to withdraw after 4 hours of fighting, but only after blowing up about 175 of Karameh's houses.<sup>69</sup> The IDF lost 33 men and suffered 161 wounded. Fifty-six PLO fighters were killed and 141 captured. The Arab Legion lost 84 soldiers.<sup>70</sup> After the raid, the *fedayeen* constantly tried to penetrate the Israeli defensive line along the Jordanian-Israeli border, and the IDF in response mounted hundreds of operations, including air attacks, border patrols and ambushes, infantry and armored raids.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> O'Neill, 524.

<sup>69</sup> Morris, 368.

<sup>70</sup> Samy Cohen, 74.

<sup>71</sup> For specific examples of Palestinian terrorist operations and the Israeli retaliatory raids, see Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims, A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict* (NY: Vintage Books, 2001), 369-371.

## **From One Border to Another**

Ultimately, clashes between the Palestinian groups and the Jordanian Arab Legion over the summer of 1970 escalated to a full-scale assault by the Arab Legion on PLO camps and bases in Amman on September 17. The event came to be known as “Black September.” According to the PLO, 3,500 civilians and 900 guerrillas were killed. On September 27, Jordan and the PLO signed the Cairo Agreement bringing the war to an end. The last guerrillas left Amman in early November, moving northward. In July 1971, King Hussein ordered his troops to wipe out the remaining guerrillas. No Arab country came to the Palestinians’ aid despite Yasser Arafat’s calls for help. By July 19, 2,300 guerrillas had been captured, perhaps as many as 5,000 fled to Syria and moved on to Lebanon later. By November 1971, there were about 4,000 guerrillas in South Lebanon where their struggle against Israel continued.<sup>72</sup>

As the PLO was dislodged from Jordan, the Palestinian insurrection continued on two fronts: the first was South Lebanon, which will be discussed, and the second which we will just mention was international terrorism against Israeli, Jewish, or “pro-Israel” or “pro-West” targets outside of Israel. Indeed, the Israeli-Lebanese border became the principal theater of Palestinian terrorist and guerilla operations. Due to the pressure felt by the Fatah bases in Jordan from the IDF, guerrilla leaders sought another sanctuary in southern Lebanon starting in the late 1960s. The Lebanese government was too weak to halt the process of southern Lebanon becoming a Palestinian state-within-a-state and the attacks on Israel. Sure enough, within a year, the Palestinian guerrillas took control of the refugee camps

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<sup>72</sup> Morris, 374-375.



on the peripheries of Lebanese cities. The *fedayeen* launched their first rocket attacks from southern Lebanon against the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmonah in the Galilee, and after repeated cross-border raids and rocket attacks, the IDF began to raid the Arkoub region, north of Mount Hermon. On May 22, 1969 a PFLP squad ambushed an Israeli school bus near Moshav Avivim and killed 12 passengers including eight children and injuring 19. The IDF responded with massive artillery attacks against southern Lebanon, killing 20 villagers and wounding 40, and prompting hundreds of villagers to flee.<sup>73</sup>

Shlaim argues that the IDF's raids were never effective, as they failed to deter infiltrators (or their hosts) for long. In fact the Karameh battle of 1968 had become a remembered symbol of heroic resistance, and thousands of young Palestinians flocked to join Fatah whose numbers rose from a couple thousands to ten or fifteen thousand in a matter of months.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the Arab states' hostility towards Israel increased, giving them incentive to support the guerrilla organizations in their struggle against Israel. Donations from rich Arab states allowed the guerrilla groups to expand and become more independent. Within months, the Palestinian bases and camps around Beirut and southern Lebanon Palestinian states-within-a-state which the IDF named "Fatahland".<sup>75</sup>

Over the years, Israel has faced different kinds of challenges by non-state actors to which it has responded with limited force. Samy Cohen, Senior Research Fellow at CERI (Centre for International Studies and Research) in Paris, and author

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<sup>73</sup> Morris, 372-373.

<sup>74</sup> Morris, 369.

<sup>75</sup> Morris, 370.

of two books relating to Israel's asymmetric wars, distinguishes two periods in Israel's history of dealing with non-state actors.<sup>76</sup> According to Cohen, the first stretched from 1948 to the 1956 Suez War, marked by conflict against infiltrators. Maoz, though, stretches this first period to 1970. In this first period, the key defensive task was to create hurdles that would make it more difficult for the infiltrators to enter Israel. The key offensive response was to hit targets, their support base, and the host state's military targets in the host state.<sup>77</sup> Israel's responses were military and often involved the use of disproportionate retaliation (sometimes against civilians) with the goal of reinforcing deterrence. Yet through violent retaliation, argues Samy Cohen, the Israeli army created an upward cycle of violence, giving way to the self-fulfilling prophecy of the security dilemma and the escalation of violence.

The second period beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s was characterized by the failure of the PLO to settle permanently in Jordan and the targeting of Israeli or Jewish targets outside of Israel. The IDF and Israeli secret services pursued a quiet and prudent war against the leaders of Black September and Fatah. The IDF also relied more on its hi-tech weapons that minimized risk for its soldiers. Unlike in the first period, which involved heavy military retaliation amidst a civilian population in a neighboring, this conflict involves targeted assassinations and rescue missions in Beirut and also European and African

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<sup>76</sup> See Samy Cohen, *Tsahal à l'épreuve du terrorisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2009); Samy Cohen, *Israel's Asymmetric Wars* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>77</sup> Maoz, 272.

countries.<sup>78</sup> Maoz and Cohen both argue that due to the difficulty of conducting offensive operations in friendly countries, Israel had to rely more on defensive measures to protect Israeli and Jewish targets abroad.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the switch from small anti-fedayeen raids to larger operations against whole villages, the IDF's strategy against non-state adversaries of the excessive use of force remained constant. As it has been demonstrated, the IDF strategy often failed to discriminate between combatants and civilians, and failed in the long run to bring an end to both individual infiltrators and armed groups' attacks on Israeli targets.

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<sup>78</sup> Samy Cohen, 78.

<sup>79</sup> Maoz, 272; Samy Cohen, 79.

## **Chapter Three: Deterrence and Retaliation in Lebanon**

### **The Rise of the Shi'ah in Lebanon**

In order to understand the dynamics of Israeli policy in Lebanon, including the 2006 Lebanon War, it is necessary to study the nature of the Lebanese state, the Shi'i community's role in Lebanese society, the Lebanese Civil War, and the First Lebanon War of 1982, and the emergence of Hezbollah. The social malaise and power struggle among Shi'ah groups following the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon allowed nascent Shi'i activism to give rise to radical political groups, in particular, Hezbollah.

In 1943, the unwritten National Pact (*Mithaq al-Watani*) established the current confessional distribution of political office in Lebanon. Such a distribution of power based on confession had already been established since the 19th century, and by the beginning of French Mandate in 1920, this political pattern was well entrenched in the political system. The National Pact conferred upon the three largest confessional groups (out of the 18 officially recognized religious sects) the three highest political offices. And so, according to the dubious 1932 population census, the President was to be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister, a Sunni Muslim, and the Parliamentary Speaker, the weakest of the three positions, a Shi'i

Muslim. The sectarian distribution was intended to prevent one group from monopolizing the political power and establishing an authoritarian state.<sup>80</sup> For the Shi'ah Muslims of Lebanon, this distribution of political office was equated to a sense of underrepresentation and deprivation for it did not reflect the reality of the demographic distribution in Lebanon. While exact numbers are hard to come by, it is clear by the 1970s that the Christian Maronites had long ceased being the demographic majority, and that in the 1980s the Shi'ah Muslims comprised about, if not more, than 30% of the total Lebanese population.

Augustus Richard Norton, Professor of International Relations at Boston University and an expert on Lebanese politics, explains that in addition to political underrepresentation, the Lebanese Shi'ah were considered to be the most disadvantaged group of the country. In comparison to other groups or the national average, Shi'ah were less educated and more impoverished, and living in poorer living conditions. "The collective confessional consciousness of the Shi'is was even further enhanced by the widespread- and not unjustified- belief that they have suffered the costs of the continuing conflict in Lebanon far more than other groups in the country, and with very little to show for their grief."<sup>81</sup>

Yet starting in the 1970s, modernization, urbanization, occupational shifts, and internal migration amongst other factors led the Shi'ah "[to find] their political voice" and begin "a political awakening."<sup>82</sup> Eitan Azani, Deputy Executive Director of

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<sup>80</sup> Gary C. Gambill, "Islamist Groups in Lebanon" in ed. Barry Rubin, *Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 131.

<sup>81</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'ah: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1987), 26.

<sup>82</sup> Norton, 19; 37.

the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism at IDC- Herzliya, writes: “Lebanon is one of the prominent examples for the fact that accelerated demographic and social progresses are among the main causes for the rise of social protest movements.”<sup>83</sup> As the Shi’ah became increasingly political, militias and opposition parties recruited them. They promised them not only social, political, and economic advancement but also the material symbols of higher status, such as money and guns.<sup>84</sup>

To add to the social malaise, about 100,000 Palestinian civilians had taken refuge in Lebanon after the War of 1948. Following Black September in 1970 in Jordan, a second wave of refugees and guerrilla groups fled to Lebanon. By the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, more than 200,000 Palestinians were in Lebanon.<sup>85</sup> In the Palestinian refugee camps attached to Lebanon’s coastal cities, the PLO recruited heavily. The state-within-a-state it built included a popular army of about 30,000 men, a taxation system, a police and judiciary force, schools, and health care facilities.<sup>86</sup> Such freedom of movement was crucial to its national aspirations and three of its national goals: the freedom to make its own political choices independent from the other Arab states; the ability to exert direct pressure on Israel; and the installation of a large organizational structure in which to operate.<sup>87</sup> Lebanon became embroiled in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict out of

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<sup>83</sup> Eitan Azani, *Hezbollah: The Story of the Party of God* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 51.

<sup>84</sup> Norton, 35.

<sup>85</sup> Morris, 374-375.

<sup>86</sup> Morris, 501.

<sup>87</sup> Gabriel Ben-Dor, “The PLO’s New Military and Politics Posture in Lebanon,” in ed. Joseph Alpher, *Israel’s Lebanon Policy: Where To?* Memorandum No. 12, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 4.

necessity, because it was the only strategic territory in which the PLO could operate relatively freely.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Shi'ah leadership gradually modernized and the Shi'ah became mobilized and involved in social and political movements in an attempt to secure better living conditions and social status. A large numbers of Shi'ah joined the Lebanese Communist Party, the Communist Action Organization and other antiestablishment organizations. Many Shi'ah, empathizing with the Palestinians' plight or simply trying to make a living, joined various *fedayeen* organizations and parties affiliated with the Palestinian cause, such as the Arab Liberation Front, the PFLP, or the Arab Nationalist Movement, and the pro-Syrian and pro-Iraqi branches of Ba'ath party.<sup>88</sup>

Alongside these secular organizations and *fedayeen* organizations rose a distinctively Shi'i social movement led by the cleric al-Sayyid Musa al-Sadr who contributed to the socio-political mobilization of the Shi'ah community.<sup>89</sup> Musa al-Sadr, known to his followers as Imam Musa, came to prominence in 1969 when he became chairman of the Lebanese Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council, created two years previously by the Lebanese National Assembly to provide a representative body for the Shi'i community to articulate growing Shi'i demands, independent from the Sunnis.<sup>90</sup> According to Norton, the Council was "a stunning confirmation of al-Sadr's status as the leading Shi'i cleric and one of the most important political figures in the

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<sup>88</sup> Norton, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Norton, 38.

<sup>90</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 20.

country.”<sup>91</sup> The Council made demands in the military, social, economic, and political realms, including demands for the construction of schools and hospitals, and the increased appointment of Shi’ah to senior government positions.<sup>92</sup> Al-Sadr succeeded in convincing the Shi’ah that they could overcome their difficult social and economics condition through Shi’ism and communal solidarity.<sup>93</sup> He said of himself, “I took the man of religion, *rajul al din*, into the social realm [...] I removed from him the dust of the ages.”<sup>94</sup> Faith, according to al-Sadr, was not about ritual, but about social concerns and society’s modern needs.

Eventually, the influence of al-Sadr prompted and directed the political awakening of the Shi’ah, who developed a religio-political culture of their own, blending Shi’ism with political struggle.<sup>95</sup> At a rally in March 1974, when giving a speech in front of 75,000 people castigating the government for failing to protect its people’s basic needs, Musa al-Sadr launched his *Harakat al-Mahrumim* [Movement of the Deprived].<sup>96</sup> Fouad Ajami, professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, cites that by the end of the 1970s, it was known, though not acknowledged, that the Shi’ah constituted the country’s largest sect of about 900,000 people.<sup>97</sup> A year later, he created the movement’s military wing known as Amal (an acronym for the militia, meaning “hope” in Arabic).<sup>98</sup> It later also expanded into a political reform movement, with leaders drawn from the lay middle

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<sup>91</sup> Norton (2007), 20.

<sup>92</sup> Norton (2007), 44.

<sup>93</sup> Norton, 41.

<sup>94</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 85.

<sup>95</sup> Ajami, 119.

<sup>96</sup> Norton, (2007) 47.

<sup>97</sup> Ajami, 189. Ajami cites Joseph Kechichian, *International Demographics*, 2, number 6, pp. 3 and 11.

<sup>98</sup> Norton, 47.



class, among them Nabih Berri, a lawyer who later became Amal's leader in 1979. Following the disappearance of al-Sadr in Libya in 1978, Amal enjoyed a resurgence of popularity amongst the Shi'ah.<sup>99</sup> Also, Nabih Berri succeeded in raising awareness about the Shi'ah's situation and compelled the government to take interest in its southern citizens.<sup>100</sup>

A third factor in the socio-political mobilization of the Lebanese Shi'ah was the ambivalent and increasingly antipathetic relationship between them and the Palestinians in Lebanon. PLO activity from Lebanon, such as infiltrations as well as hijackings of Israeli planes, and the resulting Israeli raids created conflict between the Lebanese government and the Palestinians. Battles between the Palestinian guerrillas and the Lebanese forces in 1968 and 1969 led to the Cairo Agreement of November 1969, which provided the PLO with significant autonomy in South Lebanon, which then was limited again in 1972 with another agreement.<sup>101</sup> "More than any other single factor," writes Norton, "it was the presence of large armed and aggressive PLO in Lebanon that provided the spark that ignited the underlying tensions and grievances that defined Lebanese society."<sup>102</sup>

During the first year of the Civil War, Harakat and Amal were affiliated with the Lebanese National Movement and its Palestinian allies, such as the PFLP and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). Al-Sadr, while he chastised the Lebanese government for failing to defend the South from Israeli aggression and expressed sympathy to the Palestinian national aspirations, he also criticized the

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<sup>99</sup> Norton (2007), 29.

<sup>100</sup> Norton, 68.

<sup>101</sup> Maoz, 175.

<sup>102</sup> Norton, 8.

PLO, which he called “a factor of anarchy,” for provoking Israeli retaliation: “We have had enough!” he said.<sup>103</sup> Nabih Berri continued Al-Sadr’s attitude towards the Palestinians: “The people of the south, including the Shi’ah, have given the Palestinian cause [...] their land, their children their security, their orchards- everything by their honor and dignity.”<sup>104</sup>

Ajami describes the Shi’ah as caught in the middle of the Israeli reprisals on the *fedayeen*. The Shi’ah were considered either “sympathizers with terrorists” or “collaborators with Israel.” Rage at the Palestinian anarchy had to be muzzled. “It was hard for the Shia, a community on the fringe of Arab history,” Ajami writes, “to find the self-confidence to say that they could not accept the destruction of their own world.”<sup>105</sup>

By the eve of Israel’s large-scale invasion of South Lebanon in 1982, the Lebanese were exhausted, believing that if only their country’s plunderers- the Palestinians, the Syrian, and the Israelis- would let them me, they could solve their internal problems.

### **Israeli Involvement in Lebanon and the 1982 War**

Israel deepened its involvement in Lebanon in two simultaneous arenas: the Lebanese Civil War, by providing aid to the Christian Phalanges, and South Lebanon, by fighting against the PLO. Israel began aiding the Christian militias of Lebanon in their fight against the Sunnis and the Palestinians in 1976, under the Rabin

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<sup>103</sup> Norton, 43.

<sup>104</sup> Norton, 60.

<sup>105</sup> Ajami, 163.

government. When Menachem Begin was elected in 1977, Israel increased arms shipments to the Phalange and former President Camille Chamoun's militias who were also invited to train in Israel.<sup>106</sup> Israel then agreed to provide Gemayel Bashir's Christian forces with an aerial umbrella in the event that the Syrian air force attacked the Phalange positions. Ultimately, Israeli aid escalated to direct Israeli intervention.

Israel's engagement is low-intensity conflict with the Palestinian guerrillas in Jordan and Lebanon began in 1968. In Lebanon, the IDF responded to Palestinian rocket attacks by carrying out cross-border raids against the Palestinian bases, as well as also by targeting Lebanese military facilities, such as the Beirut airport. The raids caused the mass migration of Shi'ah inhabitants, which the IDF hoped would compel the Lebanese government to terminate the Palestinian armed presence in the country.<sup>107</sup> After Black September of 1970, the PLO, PFLP and other Palestinian groups established a state-within-a-state in South Lebanon from where they continued to launch attacks against Israel. Though the number of PLO attacks decreased during the 1973 war, they quickly resumed after. In 1974, about 60 Israeli civilians were killed.<sup>108</sup> One significant attack included the murder of an American wildlife photographer on an Israeli beach and the hijacking of a Haifa-

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<sup>106</sup> Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War*, trans. Ina Friedman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 25.

<sup>107</sup> Asher Kaufman, "From the Litani to Beirut: Israel's Invasions," in ed. Clive Jones and Sergio Catignani, *Israel and Hezbollah: An asymmetric conflict in historical and comparative perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 27.

<sup>108</sup> Samy Cohen, 81.

bound bus by a group of Fatah on March 11, 1978. The “coastal road massacre” left 38 Israelis dead.<sup>109</sup>

Israel retaliated by launching a weeklong raid called Operation Litani three days later on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The campaign took place in the 40 kilometers between the Israeli-Lebanese border and the Litani River. Its primary goal was to kill the maximum number of guerrillas and destroy their military infrastructure. The operation’s secondary goal was to expand the existing Christian enclaves on the Lebanese side of the border.<sup>110</sup> It caused the death of several dozen Lebanese civilians, the destruction of hundreds of homes, and the flight of tens of thousands of people fleeing the bombardments. Three hundred PLO fighters were killed, several hundred wounded, and several dozen captured as well.<sup>111</sup> According to Norton, the Shi’ah community suffered disproportionately and incurred more casualties than any other community, and thousands of Shi’ah became refugees.<sup>112</sup> On the Israeli side, 18 men were killed and 113 wounded.<sup>113</sup>

The operation could boast limited achievements. Excluding the Tyre area, the IDF took all of the territory south of the Litani River, allowing it to establish a continuous Christian-dominated security buffer zone of about six miles in depth from the border under the direction of the SLA headed by S’ad Haddad. UN Security Council Resolution 425 of March 19, 1978 called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops in return for the installment of United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

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<sup>109</sup> Maoz, 176; Shindler, 160.

<sup>110</sup> Morris, 501.

<sup>111</sup> Morris, 501.

<sup>112</sup> Norton, 49; Azani, 56.

<sup>113</sup> Morris, 501.

peacekeeping forces in the security zone.<sup>114</sup> However, within a year, the PLO had reasserted itself in Lebanon. Furthermore, the UNIFIL failed to prevent a new series of PLO attacks in 1980 and 1981, or the missile crisis in the city Zahle when the Syrians provokingly planted anti-missile aircraft there.<sup>115</sup> A brief exchange of fighting ensued, but after mediation, the crisis in Lebanon shifted from an Israeli-Syrian struggle back to an Israeli-PLO confrontation.<sup>116</sup> More importantly, during the war, the Palestinian guerrillas retreated further north past the Litani River, making it clear that the limited operation would not succeed. If the IDF wished to wipe out the guerrillas, it would have to follow them further north. Thus, Operation Litani's use of excessive force did not succeed in restoring Israeli deterrence because it failed to impact the Palestinian guerrillas' motivations or capabilities.

Menachem Begin was reelected Prime Minister in 1981. The formation of his cabinet marked the first time that in an Israeli government, the group of leading figures who monopolized defense and foreign affairs were mostly hawkish and eager to employ Israel's military power to achieve objectives that went beyond the country's security needs.<sup>117</sup> They included Begin, newly-appointed Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, a "zealous nationalist," Lt. Gen. Rafael Eitan, a hardened soldier who believed Israel was still fighting existential wars, and

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<sup>114</sup> Morris, 502.

<sup>115</sup> For more on the Zahle missile crisis, see Schiff and Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 33-35.

<sup>116</sup> Maoz, 177.

<sup>117</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, 39.

Israeli ambassador to the United States Moshe Arens.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, Israel had developed, professionalized, and modernized its army with hi-tech material.<sup>119</sup>

Israel launched a major raid on PLO bases in South Lebanon and West Beirut in July 1981, killing more than 100 people and injuring about 600.<sup>120</sup> The 12 days of intense fighting were the most violent since Operation Litani. The deaths of so many civilians and the wave of international outrage prompted the United States to suspend the shipment of F-16 fighter planes to Israel as punishment.<sup>121</sup> But despite the use of military force, the IDF was again unable to bring the rockets to a halt.

According to Schiff and Ya'ari, the goal of the attacks was to control an escalation of tension and trigger a war that would last half a year at most.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, Sharon and Begin already had an idea of a grand strategy to invade Lebanon, put its capital under siege, and engage the Syrian forces, but he was met with opposition from the cabinet when presented in December 1981. Consequently, Sharon scaled down the plan, and decided to use PLO provocations as reasons for large-scale air strikes, which would entice the PLO to resume bombardments on the Galilee. The attacks would then justify his "Operation Little Pines" idea.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, Sharon did not reveal his grand plan for the war in Lebanon all at once. The initial plan discussed at the Cabinet meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup>, the morning following the attack on Argov, was for the IDF to secure 40 kilometers past the border in order to keep the

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<sup>118</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, 39-40.

<sup>119</sup> Samy Cohen, 82.

<sup>120</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, 36.

<sup>121</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, 100.

<sup>122</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, 35.

<sup>123</sup> Maoz, 104, 185.

settlements in the Galilee out of range from PLO fire- this was “Little Pines.”<sup>124</sup> In reality, however, Sharon’s plan was not confined to South Lebanon. Maoz delineates Sharon’s plan in four steps: first and foremost, the destruction of PLO infrastructure, human and material assets, and leadership, or the complete expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon; second, the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon; third, the installment of a Christian government headed by Bashir Gemayel in Beirut; four, the signing of a peace treaty, or non-belligerence agreement, with Lebanon.<sup>125</sup> He progressively presented moderated versions of this “Big Pines” plan to the cabinet until he finally obtained Begin’s approval for a massive air attack on sixteen PLO targets and the cabinet’s understanding that it would provoke a PLO response, which would then require the execution of the long-planned IDF invasion “Little Pines.”<sup>126</sup>

The opportunity for launching the operation came when Israeli ambassador a Palestinian terrorist gunned down the Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom, Shlomo Argov, on June 3, 1982. Israel claimed that the PLO has broken the ceasefire with the attempted assassination, turning a blind eye to the fact the attempt had been carried out by the Abu Nidal group, an enemy of the PLO.<sup>127</sup> Israel launched its invasion of Lebanon on June 5, 1982, dubbed “Operation Peace for the Galilee.”

The 1982 invasion was Israel’s largest military campaign since the 1973 War. In the war, the IDF’s fought with six to seven divisional task forces, an independent armored brigade including 1,500 tanks, and the entire air force and navy, meaning

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<sup>124</sup> Schiff and Ya’ari, 103.

<sup>125</sup> Maoz, 181.

<sup>126</sup> Morris, 515.

<sup>127</sup> Norton (2007), 32.

an estimated total of 80,000 to 100,000 soldiers.<sup>128</sup> The PLO was inferior in both numbers of fighters- the IDF estimated there were six to seven thousand PLO fighters in Fatahland- and only possessed about 250 artillery pieces and Katyusha rocket launchers, about 100 tanks, and several dozens antiaircraft guns. They were also inferior in command and control, communications, logistics, and training.<sup>129</sup> The IDF fought with an all-out assault from the ground, air and sea before advancing its soldiers. This strategy aimed to minimize Israeli casualties, albeit at the expense of Lebanese and Palestinian civilian casualties. Yair Evron explains that the IDF encountered a predictable in Beirut: “Modern armies, and the Israeli army in particular, are best suited for mobile fighting in open spaces [...],” he writes, “All this makes it extremely difficult for the Israeli army to involve itself in fighting in built-up areas.”<sup>130</sup>

Indeed, the PLO fighters were mingled with about half a million civilians in Beirut. “Heavy fighting in Beirut would therefore involve not just heavy casualties among the Israeli forces, but also many casualties among the civilian population which consisted largely of Lebanese, who did not necessary sympathize with the PLO,” Evron writes.<sup>131</sup> And yet, according to Maoz, “IDF strategy in Lebanon was dictated less by the nature of the problems it confronted on the ground and more by the availability of resources and technologies.”<sup>132</sup> During the two-month siege of Beirut, large sections of the city were targeted indiscriminately, even though West

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<sup>128</sup> Kaufman, in ed. Jones and Catignani, 33.

<sup>129</sup> Morris, 517.

<sup>130</sup> Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue* (Kent, United Kingdom: Croom Helm, 1987), 139.

<sup>131</sup> Evron, 139.

<sup>132</sup> Maoz, 224.



Beirut alone housed half a million civilians.<sup>133</sup> Bridges were bombed. Electricity, food, and water supplies were frequently cut off, with the goal of compelling the PLO leadership to succumb to pressure and agree to evacuate the city.<sup>134</sup> By the end of November 1982, the Lebanese police statistics estimated close to 20,000 dead and 30,203 wounded, with about 84 percent of the fatalities being civilians.

Additionally, as a result of the war, 800,000 civilians were internally displaced.<sup>135</sup>

Former Foreign Minister Abba Eban commented on the Lebanon War: “There is a new vocabulary with special verbs ‘to pound’, ‘to crush’, ‘to liquidate’ [...] Not one word of humility, compassion or restraint has come from the Israeli government in many weeks, nothing by the rhetoric of self-assertion, the hubris that the Greeks saw as the gravest danger to a man’s fate.”<sup>136</sup>

The IDF used disproportionate force in its fight against the PLO, but the use of force, again, failed to restore deterrence in the long run. The war did achieve its main goal, which was the removal of the PLO in South Lebanon, thus protecting the Galilee from its rockets. Using the notion of “deterrence” in a purely immediate strategic sense, deterrence succeeded thanks to the use of heavy military force during the First Lebanon War. However, a large number of Palestinians remained in South Lebanon and also moved up to Beirut. The Israel use of heavy conventional weapons and tactics against populated areas caused important collateral damage, causing the strategy of excessive force to backfire. “Virtually all causes of escalation in the fighting,” finds Maoz, “were due to the IDF’s infliction of civilian casualties

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<sup>133</sup> Shindler, 175.

<sup>134</sup> Kaufman, 34.

<sup>135</sup> Kaufman, 34.

<sup>136</sup> Shindler, 174.

through area bombardments.”<sup>137</sup> “The Civil War reached unparalleled heights of violence and mayhem,” writes Asher Kaufman. Indeed, the heavy civilian casualties and damage only deepened the Shi’i population’s already existent antagonism towards Israel, which facilitated the rise of radical Shi’ah groups.

On August 21, 1982, the IDF successfully expelled the PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut, and several days later helped its ally, Bashir Gemayel, win the presidential elections. Gemayel was killed in his Beirut headquarters on September 14th. The following year, Israel and Bashir’s brother, Amin Gemayel, signed a peace agreement, but without the power to implement it, Gemayel’s government was forced to cancel it in 1984.<sup>138</sup>

Between June 1982 and June 1985, Israel suffered about 650 dead and almost 3,000 men wounded in Lebanon. The Syrians lost between 500 and 1,000 soldiers, while the PLO lost about 1,000 fighters. There seem to be no reliable figures about Palestinian and Lebanese civilian casualties; reports vary between hundreds of deaths to 20,000 deaths.<sup>139</sup> Journalist Robert Fisk who lived in Lebanon during the war writes that “so enormous were the casualty tolls that the continued carnage even pushed news of the Falklands War into second place in British newspapers [...] On the edge of Sabra, the Muslim cemetery was now so crowded with dead from the Israeli raids that corpses were being buried 30 deep in mass graves, one on top of the other.”<sup>140</sup> Whatever the exact numbers, the Lebanon War

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<sup>137</sup> Maoz, 224.

<sup>138</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Israel-Syrian-Lebanese Triangle,” in ed. Efraim Karsh, Rory Miller, and Michael Kerr, *Conflict, Diplomacy and Society in Israeli-Lebanese Relations* (Oxon, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 84. The book is a reproduction of *Israel Affairs* 14, No. 4.

<sup>139</sup> Morris, 558.

<sup>140</sup> Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Atheneum, 1990), 222.

claimed an enormous number of civilian lives- mostly Shi'ah- and destroyed a large number of homes in South Lebanon, according to Norton.<sup>141</sup> Head of the PLO Yasser Arafat and the PLO escaped Lebanon. On the eve of the war, there were an estimated 18,000 PLO members in Lebanon; by 1984, the estimated number of PLO members was between 7,000 and 7,500 members, meaning that 60% had fled.<sup>142</sup> The American-mediated agreement on May 17, 1983 was a turning point in the deteriorating situation of the IDF in Lebanon. It included restrictions on Lebanese sovereignty such as limits on the use of airspace, soldiers, and weapons.

According to plan, the Lebanon War was also supposed to deliver a blow to Palestinian self-esteem and ensure quiet in the West Bank and Gaza, which Israel had annexed following the 1967 War. Ariel Sharon was strongly opposed to the idea of a Palestinian state, and concerned about the rising influence and legitimacy of Yasser Arafat and the PLO on the world stage, as well as the 1981 ceasefire between Israel and the PLO. Crushing the center of Palestinian resistance in Lebanon would reduce its influence in the Palestinian territories.<sup>143</sup> However, instead of silencing Palestinian resistance in the territories, the war only encouraged it. The First Intifada, which would last six years, broke out in 1987.

### **The Rise of Hezbollah**

The Lebanon War and the consequent expulsion of the PLO made space for radical groups to rise amongst the Shi'i community. Yair Evron calls the Shi'ah the

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<sup>141</sup> Norton, 49.

<sup>142</sup> Ben-Dor, in ed. Alpher, 9.

<sup>143</sup> Samy Cohen, 84.

“chief [beneficiaries]” of the 1982 War: they had become the largest community in Lebanon, and though they had remained the least cohesive faction in the country before the war, the war “freed” the Shi’ah from PLO rule.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, Operation Litani and the First Lebanon War accelerated the socio-political transformations that had been in motion before them, notably the mobilization and radicalization of the Shi’i community.<sup>145</sup> The Shi’ah hoped that the war would finally allow a division of political power that would reflect their demographic situation. But following the expulsion of the PLO in the Lebanon War, Amal slowly lost influence on the political scene to more radical groups rose to power. Small groups propelled by despair and dedicated to violence emerged.<sup>146</sup> This revolutionary fervor, inspired by the successful Islamic Revolution of 1979, widened the gap between the extreme groups and the existing political Shi’ah outlets. As Asher Kaufman writes, “If revolutionary Iran was the ideological mother of Hizbollah and Syria was the instrumental father, then the Israeli invasion of Lebanon could be considered to be the midwife that brought the Shi’a organization to life.”<sup>147</sup> Debate raged within the Amal movement about the needed course of action, and Nabih Berri’s controversial decision to join the Syrian-backed Lebanese National Salvation Front in 1982 caused a rift in the Amal movement, bringing some of its senior members to retire from it. Thus the Shi’i community was split into two camps: the existing moderates trying to work within the system, and the radicals working to overthrow the status quo.<sup>148</sup> Yitzhak

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<sup>144</sup> Evron, 165.

<sup>145</sup> Shindler, 342.

<sup>146</sup> Norton, 100.

<sup>147</sup> Kaufman, 36.

<sup>148</sup> Azani, 39.

Rabin predicted: "Lebanon does not appear likely to be a confrontation state against Israel in the foreseeable future [...] Rather, Lebanon's weakness has rendered it, and will continue to render it a host state for terrorism."<sup>149</sup>

One organization that emerged in the 1980s was Hezbollah [Party of God], founded in the wake of the 1982 Lebanon War as a successor to other groups in the Beqaa region and as a rival to Amal. During the 1982 War already, Robert Fisk reported the beginning of the Shi'ah's religiously-inspired resistance. "The Lebanese Shia were learning the principles of martyrdom and putting them into practice," Fisk writes. "Some of the Shia fighters had torn off pieces of their shirts and wrapped them around their heads as bands of martyrdom as the Iranian revolutionary guards had begun doing a year before [...]," Fisk writes, "Never before had we seen these men wear headbands like this; we thought it was another militia affectation but it was not. It was the beginning of a legend which also contained a strong element of truth. The Shia were now the Lebanese resistance, nationalist no doubt, but also inspired by their religion. The party of God- in Arabic, the *Hezbollah*- were on the breaches of Khalde that night."<sup>150</sup>

Hezbollah differed from Amal on many levels. For instance, while Amal was a secular national movement trying to reform the existing political order so as to advance Shi'ah interests, Hezbollah's was religious and pan-Islamic, and regarded the Lebanese government as illegitimate.<sup>151</sup> The two groups also had different goals. While Amal worked from within the Lebanese political system, Hezbollah sought to

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<sup>149</sup> Yitzhak Rabin, "In the Aftermath of the War in Lebanon: Israel's Objectives," in ed. Alpher, 41.

<sup>150</sup> Fisk, 227.

<sup>151</sup> Azani, 62.

overthrow it and establish an Islamic republic in Lebanon. Both groups, however, sought the same social base: the Shi'i community.<sup>152</sup>

Iran helped found and maintain Hezbollah. The Islamic Republic's Higher Defense Council maintained the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah, and through it, Khomeini transmitted his advice to Hezbollah.<sup>153</sup> Below the Council operate other bodies and committees including the Politburo which provides advice to the Council, and the General Convention which implements Council orders and plans daily operations in Lebanon.<sup>154</sup>

Initially, Hezbollah's goal was the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon- though not by force. According to Hezbollah, the Maronites, Phalanges, Israel, France, the Soviet Union, Iraq, and especially the United States were holding the Lebanese Shi'ah under siege. Its future leader, Hassan Nasrallah, described the movement as "born as a reaction to the occupation of part of our country [Lebanon]".<sup>155</sup> The solution to the Shi'ah's troubles was to be found in religion- the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the decisions of religious leaders. Hezbollah's message was solid, simple, comforting, and accessible to a population that felt neglected and undervalued.<sup>156</sup> In order to counter Amal's power, it initiated activities at three levels: the ideological religious level with the goal of incorporating religious activism and personal sacrifice into social mobilization; the social level with the goal

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<sup>152</sup> Azani, 63.

<sup>153</sup> Norton, 102.

<sup>154</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *Arab-Israeli Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 255.

<sup>155</sup> Hassan Nasrallah, "Who is Hassan Nasrallah?" interview with *Nida al-Watani*, 31 August 1993, in ed. Noe, 127.

<sup>156</sup> Norton, 105.

of abolishing discrimination and improving the living conditions of the Shi'ah; and thirdly, the military level, with the aim of expelling all "foreigners" from Lebanon.<sup>157</sup>

Hezbollah progressively gained recognition and legitimacy. After series of attacks against the Multinational Forces (MNF) and the IDF in Lebanon, and terrorism involving the kidnapping of Western citizens in Lebanon, airplane hijackings, and terrorist attacks abroad in 1983 Hezbollah gained international attention. One of these attacks was a suicide operation on October 1983 killing 241 American Marines and wounding 100 Marines at their barracks at the Beirut International Airport. Hezbollah's attacks, characterized by originality and extreme violence, caused the withdrawal of the MNFs from Beirut in February 1984, the withdrawal of the IDF to the Security Zone in May 1985.<sup>158</sup>

The Israeli withdrawal escalated the struggle between Amal and Hezbollah, as the two movements rushes to establish a foothold in the newly freed areas. Hezbollah was quick to institutionalize its activities in the south, successfully leaving facts on the ground before Amal was able to counter it.<sup>159</sup> Shi'ism is imbued with an ethos of resistance to tyranny of oppression, according to Gambill. The combination of resistance and relief was central to Hezbollah's popular appeal.<sup>160</sup> The organization outlined its ideology in a manifesto the organization called its Open Letter. Hezbollah was at its peak in terms of growth and influence in the late 1980s, and by 1987, its presence in South Lebanon was a fait accompli. In 1988, Hezbollah and Amal clashed in the first intra-Shi'ah battle in south Beirut and in the south.

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<sup>157</sup> Azani, 63.

<sup>158</sup> Azani, ix.

<sup>159</sup> Azani, 67.

<sup>160</sup> Gambill, 133.

While Hezbollah crushed Amal's forces in southern Beirut, ultimately Amal fighters chased most of Hezbollah fighters out of South Lebanon, surrounded them, and trapped them and Nasrallah for three weeks.

The battle ended in January 1989 with the Damascus Agreement which allowed a progressive return of Hezbollah fighters to the south in return for the deployment of Syrian troops in Beirut.<sup>161</sup> Nonetheless, Hezbollah was significantly hampered in its political maneuvering following the Agreement. Syria prohibited Hezbollah from competing freely in the parliamentary elections, and it was helpless in the face of the government's post-war socioeconomic policies which favored the elite. Gary Gambill writes that "Ironically, these inequities *strengthened* Hizballah by perpetuating the Shi'a community's dependence on its social welfare institutions and discrediting rival political forces. By excluding itself from government and delivering both resistance and social services with amazing efficiency, Hizballah projected an image of incorruptibility that contrasted starkly with the legendary excess of the governing elite."<sup>162</sup>

The Taif Agreement signed in Saudi Arabia in 1989 signaled the beginning of the end of the Lebanese Civil War. Although it called for the disarmament of all militias, Hezbollah not only retained its arms, but also maintained a monopoly of control in South Lebanon and parts of Beirut. It grew from a small guerrilla organization to a popular sub-state actor in Lebanon with solid ties to Iran.<sup>163</sup> Under the umbrella of Hezbollah operated a number of various Islamic and Shi'ah

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<sup>161</sup> Nicholas Blanford in ed. Nicholas Noe, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah* (London: Verso, 2007), 6.

<sup>162</sup> Gambill, in ed. Rubin, 134.

<sup>163</sup> Blanford, 9.



organizations: the Amal al-Islami movement, which was a central militia arm, and the Lebanese Muslim Student Organization are examples. They all recognized Ayatollah Khomeini as their religious and political leader and all ultimately strove to establish an Islamic Republic in Lebanon.<sup>164</sup> In the 1992 parliamentary elections in which it was allowed to participate, Hezbollah secured 12 of the 128 seats, and nine in the 1996 elections.<sup>165</sup> The Hezbollah parliamentary bloc served primarily as an alternative Shi'i voice to Amal, which had become stagnant under Berri's leadership, as well as helped entrench Hezbollah within Lebanon's political framework.<sup>166</sup> Even though Hezbollah entered local politics, it claimed: "Our participation in the elections and entry into the National Assembly do not alter the fact that we are a resistance party. We shall, in fact, work to turn the whole of Lebanon into a country of resistance, and the state into a state of resistance."<sup>167</sup> It is at this point that the future leader of the movement and its principle public profile emerged.

Hassan Nasrallah was born in 1960 in East Beirut, and aspired to religious leadership at an early age. After secondary school, he attended religious seminary in Iraq, where his mentor, Abbas Mussawi, exposed him to the teachings of Iranian cleric (and future leader of the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution), Ruhollah Khomeini.<sup>168</sup> Nasrallah first got involved with Amal at the outbreak of the Civil War and became its leader for the Beqaa region by 1982. When Berri joined the National Salvation Front, Nasrallah, like others who sought a more Islamic orientation for

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<sup>164</sup> Azani, 43.

<sup>165</sup> Blanford, in ed. Noe, 9.

<sup>166</sup> Blanford, in ed. Noe, 9.

<sup>167</sup> Hassan Nasrallah, "Not an Iranian community," interview with *Al-Watan al-Arabi*, 11 September 1992, in ed. Noe, 88.

<sup>168</sup> Eben Kaplan, *Profile: Hassan Nasrallah*, Council for Foreign Affairs  
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/11132/profile.html>

Amal, left the organization to join up with a group of young Lebanese men most of whom had been religious scholars from the Beqaa.<sup>169</sup> They, along with others, founded a new movement taking shape that would later become Hezbollah. Nasrallah recruited and organized new members and by 1985 he was the Hezbollah leader for the Beqaa. In 1987, Nasrallah was appointed to Hezbollah's Majlis al-Shura and began giving his first speeches and interviews. After Hussein Mussawi- who had been co-founder of Amal before breaking off from Amal to become the leader of Hezbollah- was assassinated by Israel in 1991, Nasrallah became Secretary-General.<sup>170</sup>

Part of Hezbollah's mission was the continuation of the struggle against Israel. The organization delineated its core beliefs and self-image in its Open Letter of February 16, 1985. Presented by spokesperson Sheik Ibrahim al-Amin and published in the *Al-Safir* newspaper and in a publicly available brochure, the presentation of the Open Letter marked the official launch of Hezbollah. It read: "Our primary assumption in our right against Israel states that the Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception, and built on lands wrested from their owners, at the expense of the rights of the Muslim people. Therefore our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated."<sup>171</sup> Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic International Studies reveals that Hezbollah offered continued support, guidance, and material assistance to the Palestinians. During the Second Intifada, Nasrallah

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<sup>169</sup> Hassan Nasrallah, "Who is Hassan Nasrallah?" interview with *Nida al-Watan*, 31 August 1993, in ed. Noe, 126.

<sup>170</sup> Blanford, in ed. Noe, 5, 7.

<sup>171</sup> "The Hezbollah Program: An Open Letter, February 16, 1985," in ed. Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics and Foreign Relations, 1948 to the Present* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 427.

promised Palestinian families that he would work to release Palestinian prisoners. Four years later, Hezbollah secured a prisoner swap agreement with Israel. In exchange for the bodies of three Israeli soldiers kidnapped along the Israeli-Lebanese border in October 2000, the IDF and the Israeli Prison Authority released 429 security prisoners in Israel, including 400 Palestinian prisoners from the West Bank and Gaza. They also released the bodies of 60 Hezbollah fighters.<sup>172</sup> Hezbollah also smuggled arms to Fatah, the Palestinian security forces, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad. There is evidence, according to Cordesman, that Hezbollah actively trained Palestinian fighters. In July 2004, for the first time, Nasrallah publicly acknowledged that Hezbollah provided secret assistance to Palestinian fighters.<sup>173</sup>

In addition to supporting the Palestinian struggle against Israel, Hezbollah continued to carry out its own operations against Israel (and the United States). Between 1983 and 2000, when Israel unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon, 250 Israeli soldiers were killed in Hezbollah attacks.<sup>174</sup>

Today, Hezbollah is more than a terrorist organization and it has assets its values that can be threatened. Built in a hierarchic structure that incorporates all of its activities- political, social, military- it is unlike other terrorist organizations, refusing to distinguish between its social, political, or military branches.<sup>175</sup>

Hezbollah hold seats in the Lebanese parliament and therefore is accountable to the Lebanese government and the Lebanese people. Its material assets- infrastructure

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<sup>172</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "IDF Preparations to Carry Out the Exchange Deal," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2004/IDF%20preparations%20to%20carry%20out%20the%20exchange%20deal%20>

<sup>173</sup> Cordesman, *Arab-Israeli Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars*, 256.

<sup>174</sup> Maoz, 210.

<sup>175</sup> Shmuel Bar, "Deterring Non-State Terrorist Groups," *Comparative Strategy* 46 (2007), 473.

and weapons- not to mention their source of origin, i.e. Iran and Syria, are also of important to the organization. In terms of its military structure, the Jihad Council orders and executes military and terrorist activities, but the regional units enjoy a high level of autonomy. This command-and-control structure allows each unit a high level of tactical autonomy, allowing it to be flexible, while also keeping it in line in the hierarchy.<sup>176</sup>

In response to Hezbollah operations in the security zone, Israel carried out two large-scale operations which employed military force against civilians: Operation Accountability in July 1993 and Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996. Both these operations involved the use of massive firepower in an open effort to compel the civilian population and the Lebanese and Syrian governments to clamp down on Hezbollah.<sup>177</sup> Operation Accountability was a massive air and artillery assault against Hezbollah bases in South Lebanon. Around the clock fire was targeted at the outskirts of villages, and then in the villages themselves once inhabitants departed. Between July 25<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>, nearly 300, 000 villagers – mostly Shi’ah- fled northwards. The hope was that the flux of refugees would compel the Lebanese government to ask Syria to rein in Hezbollah.<sup>178</sup> Hezbollah, however, was able to fire off its rockets at northern Israel, resulting in the flight of Israel’s northern residents. Morris states that Hezbollah, despite its primitive capabilities, managed to establish a kind of “balance of terror.”<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Bar, 474.

<sup>177</sup> Maoz, 225.

<sup>178</sup> Morris, 618.

<sup>179</sup> Morris, 619.

Operation Grapes of Wrath, which started on April 11<sup>th</sup> and lasted 16 days, also had the goal of compelling the Syrians to restrict Hezbollah. The campaign involved massive bombardments of Hezbollah centers and Shi'ah villages, a blockade of the Lebanese coastline, and the destruction of main roads and two power stations. By the end of the first week, about 400, 000 Lebanese civilians had fled to Sidon and Beirut. Despite Prime Minister Shimon Peres's claim that Israel was only trying to end "Hezbollah terror," the operation left 165 Lebanese civilians killed and 401 wounded, including 106 Lebanese villagers killed during an accidental Israeli shelling on the village of Qana on April 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>180</sup> Sixty-two Israeli civilians were wounded as a result of rocket fire.<sup>181</sup> As a result of the accident at Qana, increased international pressure called for a ceasefire. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, a ceasefire did go into effect, barring Israel and Hezbollah from attacking civilians. However, the ceasefire was a double-edged sword. Despite the agreement, Hezbollah could continue to target Israeli targets abroad and Israeli military targets; but Israel would be severely hampered in its response if it could not attack the villages from where the attacks were coming.<sup>182</sup> Operation Grapes of Wrath, like Operation Accountability, despite the use of excessive force, resulted in little- if any- strategic gains and international diplomatic criticism. Such consequences do not reinforce Israeli deterrence; on the contrary, the use of excessive force turned the local residents and the international community against Israel, thereby boosting the morale (motivation) of Hezbollah.

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<sup>180</sup> Morris, 639.

<sup>181</sup> Noe, 145.

<sup>182</sup> Morris, 640.

Another important operation took place on June 2, 1994. It involved a raid in the Beqaa Valley on a Hezbollah training camp which killed between 30 to 45 people. In addition to promising "swift and merciless revenge," Hezbollah immediately responded by launching with least four barrages of Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, most of which landed near Nahariya, producing some damage but no casualties. Israel's northern commander, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, warned that if the attacks continued, "we will be forced to take steps that will hurt them infinitely more."<sup>183</sup> Despite the fact that Hezbollah responded to the Israeli attack with more rockets, and promised to launch more in the future, proving that the initial use of force was ineffective, Israeli military leaders continue to threaten heavy retaliation, failing to realize that the use of disproportionate force only increased Hezbollah's motivation, and therefore failed to install deterrence.

In 1998, the Israeli government adopted UN Resolution 425, and in 1999, candidate for Prime Minister Ehud Barak promised to withdraw completely from Lebanon if elected. It had already withdrawn the bulk of its forces in 1985, but had held onto a self-declared security zone in which operated between 1,000 and 1,500 IDF soldiers, 2,500 South Lebanon Army (SLA) troops, and members of the Israeli intelligence service.<sup>184</sup> In March 2000, the Israeli government approved a resolution announcing that "the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] will deploy along the border with Lebanon by July 2000, and from there will secure the safety of the northern towns

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<sup>183</sup> Clyde Haberman, "Dozens are Killed as Israeli Attack Camp in Lebanon," *New York Times* (3 June 1994), <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/03/world/dozens-are-killed-as-israelis-attack-camp-in-lebanon.html>.

<sup>184</sup> Gal Luft, "Israel's Security Zone in Lebanon," *The Middle East Quarterly* 7, No. 3 (September 2000) <http://www.meforum.org/70/israels-security-zone-in-lebanon-a-tragedy>.

and villages.”<sup>185</sup> On June 16, 2000, UN Secretary General confirmed to the Security Council that Israel had withdrawn completely.

Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000 because felt it was entrenched in a “muddy” swamp, or “quagmire” that it had not foreseen. The cost of staying in Lebanon was unexpectedly heavy and was not bearing its fruit. By May 2000, Israel had suffered 1,000 casualties.<sup>186</sup> Attacks against Israeli forces were not ceasing and the deployment in Lebanon was requiring increasing manpower and diverting the IDF from a more important issues- a potential war with regular Arab forces.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, Israel was no longer only faced with remnants of the PLO left in Lebanon, but also found itself in the middle of other internal conflicts, such as the one between the Druze and Muslims in the Shouf Mountains area.<sup>188</sup> Despite the security zone, the Israeli death toll due to Hezbollah’s increased attacks, the deepening of Israel in Lebanese affairs, and the lack of positive results caused Israeli skepticism about its presence there both amongst the civilian population and in the army, and ultimately led the IDF to withdraw completely.

For the first time, Israel withdrew because of its enemy’s military campaign. To the Arab world, the Israeli withdrawal of 2000 signified that the most powerful army of the Middle East, with its air force and armored divisions, was incapable of crushing a guerrilla organization much weaker than itself. Hezbollah proclaimed that it had forced Israel out of Lebanon, and in the territories, Palestinian Islamic Jihad took up this cry. Indeed, the withdrawal had a “hypnotic effect” on the

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<sup>185</sup> “Resolution on Withdrawal from Lebanon, March 5, 2000,” in ed. Rabinovich and Reinhartz, 517.

<sup>186</sup> Maoz, 251.

<sup>187</sup> Evron, 167.

<sup>188</sup> Maoz, 251; See Schiff and Ya’ari, 242-245.

Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, and emboldened them to take up arms.<sup>189</sup>

As Morris writes, “And the Hizbullah had just pointed out the route to successful liberation.”<sup>190</sup> All one needed were a few weapons, and Palestine could be liberated without making any concessions to Israel.

While Israel committed itself to complying with Resolution 425, Barak also warned: “From now on, the government of Lebanon is accountable for what takes place within its territory, and the Lebanese and Syrian governments are responsible for preventing acts of terror or aggression against Israel, which is from today deployed within its borders.”<sup>191</sup> He further warned that Israel will fulfill its duty and right of self-defense by responding with “force and determination” to any attack on its sovereignty, citizens, or soldiers.<sup>192</sup>

### **Israeli Reactions to Hezbollah, 2000-2006**

Between the unilateral withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000 and the breakout of the 2006 Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah continuously carried out attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians by way of rocket attacks, border shootings, and bomb explosions. It argued that, despite the Israeli withdrawal, a piece of land that remained under Israeli control, the Shabaa Farms, was in actuality

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<sup>189</sup> Shindler, 204.

<sup>190</sup> Morris, 663.

<sup>191</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Withdrawal from Lebanon,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2000/4/Withdrawal%20from%20Lebanon](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2000/4/Withdrawal%20from%20Lebanon).

<sup>192</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Lebanon Withdrawal Completed- 25-May-2000,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2000/Lebanon+Withdrawal+Completed+-+25-May-2000.htm>.



Lebanese.<sup>193</sup> Lebanon corroborated this claim as well. On April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Chairman of the Lebanese parliament, Nabih Berri, asserted that “resistance” would continue until Israel left the fourteen farms in the area. On the morning of May 21<sup>st</sup>, when the IDF finished its withdrawal, Nasrallah declared: “From this morning, the Shabaa Farms area will be included in the field of resistance activity, exactly as other occupied areas.”<sup>194</sup> The organization, therefore, continued its limited military confrontation with Israel. Daniel Sobelman, former Arab Affairs Correspondent for *Ha’aretz*, argues that Hezbollah activity since the withdrawal has largely followed the “an eye for an eye” principle.

The first major crisis following the Israeli withdrawal took place on October 7, 2000 at Mount Dov at the Lebanese border when Hezbollah attacked a routine IDF patrol, killing and kidnapping three soldiers. Even though Prime Minister Ehud Barak announced that Israel “[reserved] the right to respond at the time we see fit,” no response occurred.<sup>195</sup> Barak did not want to fight on two fronts, as he was already preoccupied with the Second Intifada. Even though Israel did not respond militarily to the provocations, the government did outline a couple of plans for the Lebanese theater. Major generals and generals from the Northern Command devised the plan “Defense of the Land” in late 2002, which would involve air strikes on Hezbollah and Syrian forces in Lebanon, the destruction of missile launch pads followed by an invasion on the ground and a deployment of an elite paratroop unit

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<sup>193</sup> Shindler 344.

<sup>194</sup> Daniel Sobelman, *New Rules of the Game: Israel and Hizbollah after the Withdrawal from Lebanon* Memorandum No. 69 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, January 2004), 69.

<sup>195</sup> Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 40.

to the Litani River in order to encircle and trap Hezbollah forces.<sup>196</sup> In 2005, though, when Syrian forces withdrew from Lebanon, the rationale for the operation was eliminated and the plan lost momentum. During the next two months, another plan was devised, called Elevated Waters. Not that much different from “Defense of the Land,” this plan also called for ground action following an Israeli air strike, and would involve the army and reserves. On November 22, 2005, Ariel Sharon convened a meeting on the Lebanese issue, and the possibility of an escalated Israeli response to provocation, but the Prime Minister ended the meeting with the words: “whatever doesn’t have to be done over there- shouldn’t be done.”<sup>197</sup> When Ehud Olmert succeeded Sharon in January 2006, he kept in mind the idea of a retaliatory plan on Hezbollah but did not order any action to be taken just yet.

About 23 IDF soldiers were killed between May 2000 and July 2006; about 25 were wounded; and eight Israeli civilians were killed.<sup>198</sup> Hezbollah attempted to kidnap Israeli soldiers at least five times since 2000, but 2006 was its first successful kidnapping.<sup>199</sup> Following the Cedar Revolution in 2005, the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon in April encouraged Lebanese political forces to demand that Hezbollah disarm, but still it did not.<sup>200</sup> By 2005, towns and cities as far south as Tel Aviv were within reach of Hezbollah’s 12,000 or so rockets.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 61.

<sup>197</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 71.

<sup>198</sup> A chronological list of attacks in which Israeli civilians or soldiers were killed between 2000 and 2006 can be found at Israel Minister of Foreign Affairs, “Hizbullah Attacks Along Israel’s Northern Border May 2000-June 2006,” Israel Minister of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

<sup>199</sup> Shindler, 344.

<sup>200</sup> Abdel Monem Said Aly, “The Sixth Arab-Israeli War: An Arab Perspective,” *Middle East Brief No. 11* (The Crown Center for Middle East Studies: October 2006): 2.

<sup>201</sup> William Harris, “Lebanon’s Roller Coaster Ride,” in ed. Rubin, 71.

Initially, Israel pursued a policy of containment, considering Hezbollah to be a mere nuisance though not a strategic threat. In July 2003, as IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz stepped down to become Defense Minister, he warned of Hezbollah's increasing threat to Israeli national security. His replacement, Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon also warned that Hezbollah's missiles were a danger to Israeli northern cities and towns. Yet despite the warnings and Hezbollah's provocations, Israel sought to contain Hezbollah. With the Second Intifada taking pace in Gaza and the West Bank, the IDF feared that a tougher response would open up a northern front and lead to escalation with Syria.<sup>202</sup>

### **Overview of The Second Lebanon War**

Containment ended when Hezbollah shelled the villages of Shlomi and Zarit in the Galilee, crossed the UN-demarcated Blue Line and captured two Israeli soldiers on patrol, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, on July 12, 2006. Eight soldiers were killed and two more injured in the subsequent chase. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared that same morning: "This morning's events were not a terrorist attack, but the action of a sovereign state that attacked Israel for no reason and without provocation. The Lebanese government, of which Hizbullah is a member, is trying to undermine regional stability. Lebanon is responsible and Lebanon will bear the consequences of its actions."<sup>203</sup> Olmert wanted to act quickly, assuming that the Hezbollah attack offered him a window of opportunity to strike

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<sup>202</sup> Efraim Inbar, "How Israel Bungled the Second Lebanon War," *Middle East Quarterly* (Summer 2007): 57.

<sup>203</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Second Lebanon War (2006)," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

back with the support of the international community.<sup>204</sup> To Chief of Staff Dan Halutz and Defense Minister Amir Peretz, it was clear that Israel had to respond to the attack.

The day of Hezbollah's attack, the Israeli cabinet convened to decide upon a response. It authorized more than 100 immediate aerial attacks on Hezbollah's medium- and long-range missile capabilities, infrastructural targets in southern Lebanon, as well as roads and bridges leading north that the organization could use to transfer the abducted soldiers or escape.<sup>205</sup> The next day, the IDF imposed a full-scale ground and naval blockade, attacked Hezbollah's al-Manar television station, its headquarters in Beirut, and the Rafiq Hariri International airport in Beirut, forcing it to close.<sup>206</sup> Following the air campaign, ground operations began on July 17 with the entry of IDF troops into border villages. IDF Spokeswoman Brigadier General Miri Regev told reporters that Israel "had to put Lebanon back 20 years."<sup>207</sup> Thus started the Second Lebanon War which would last 34 days.

A full week after the government's decision to go to war, on July 19<sup>th</sup>, the Israeli Political-Security cabinet decided the aims of the war it was had launched. They included: the unconditional release of the two abducted soldiers; the halting of rockets and missiles against Israeli targets; the implementation of UN Resolution 1559 (referring to the UN call for the disarming of Hezbollah); the consolidation of Lebanese government authority throughout Lebanon; and finally, the deployment of

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<sup>204</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 76.

<sup>205</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Second Lebanon War (2006)," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

<sup>206</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Second Lebanon War (2006)", "Israel Strikes Back- Operation Change of Direction," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

<sup>207</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 78.

the Lebanese army along the Israeli-Lebanese border.<sup>208</sup> Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University (BESA) Efraim Inbar and Anthony Cordesman both interpret these goals to actually mean the crushing of Hezbollah, the empowerment of the Lebanese government, and the transformation of Lebanon into a regular state. Peretz claimed that the war's objective was to make Hezbollah regret the day it started the war and limit its ability to operate and launch missiles.<sup>209</sup> In other words, the goal was to diminish Hezbollah's willpower (motivation) and capability, and thus restore Israeli deterrence.

According to Cordesman, another important goal of the war was the restoration of Israeli deterrence after its erosion since the withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005.<sup>210</sup> Speaking of Israel's imminent withdrawal from Lebanon, in an interview with the Syrian newspaper *Teshreen* in 1999, Nasrallah demonstrated his understanding of Israeli deterrence strategy and its failure as proven by the withdrawal. "One should not measure the impact of events in south Lebanon based only on the number of operations or of Israeli killed and wounded," he says, "for there is something more important than that- namely the psychological aspect. This factor is very important for the Israeli military establishment, which relies on its ability and power to hurt the enemy [...] and what happened has debunked the myth of the army that cannot be defeated, and dealt a severe blow to the high morale that the Israeli military boasts about."<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Political Security Cabinet Communique," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

<sup>209</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 80.

<sup>210</sup> Anthony Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons' of the Israeli-Hezbollah War," Working Draft for Outside Comment (Center for Strategic and International Studies: August 17, 2006): 3.

<sup>211</sup> Hassan Nasrallah, "Towards Liberation," interview with *Teshreen*, 21 June 1999, in ed. Noe, 200.

Because the operation was originally designed as a quick military operation lasting only a few hours or a few days at most, the IDF had no solid plan or objective. Harel and Issacharoff, in their book *34 Days*, report the Israeli leadership's daily- and persistently unresolved- confrontation with the question of a solid military plan with objectives and clear strategy. Giora Romm, a former deputy commander of the Israeli Air Force (IAF), writes, "The definition of the goals changed during the fighting, in an effort to adapt them to the emerging situation," and therefore the strategies the IDF and Hezbollah employed evolved during the operation.<sup>212</sup> The IDF confronted low-intensity conflict with a combination of air force and special forces, cutting the involvement of ground forces. It relied heavily on its air force, using excessive power, in the hope to deliver a decisive blow to Hezbollah.<sup>213</sup> As a general strategy, air power is very tempting, as it can cause great destruction to the enemy and minimize one's own casualties.<sup>214</sup>

Over the course of the war, Hezbollah fired close to 4,000 rockets into Israel. Nine hundred and one of them landed in urban areas, as well as almost 1,000 in the area of Kiryat Shmonah, Israel's northernmost city, 808 near Nahariya, Israel's northernmost coast city, and 93 near the major city of Haifa. About 6,000 Israeli homes were hit, 300,00 residents displaced, and more than one million forced to live in shelters. Four thousand Israeli civilians were treated in hospitals for injuries, including 33 who were seriously wounded, and 43 civilians died over the course of

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<sup>212</sup> Giora Romm, "A Test of Rival Strategies: Two Ships Passing in the Night," in ed. Shlomo Brom and Meir Elran, *The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives* (Tel Aviv: INSS, 2007), 50.

<sup>213</sup> Jonathan Spyer, "Lebanon 2006: Unfinished War," *Middle East Review of International Affairs XII: 1* (March 2008): 1.

<sup>214</sup> Inbar, 58.

the war.<sup>215</sup> One hundred and seventeen Israeli soldiers were killed, the lowest number of casualties incurred for Israel in any of its wars since 1948.<sup>216</sup> Lebanese casualties will be discussed later.

The IDF convinced itself that at least it had dealt Hezbollah a good blow. Israel claimed it had killed around 700 Hezbollah fighters and destroyed a good portion of its possessions.<sup>217</sup> But as the dust settled after the ceasefire, it became clear that neither the IDF nor Hezbollah could claim a complete victory in the war. For Israel, the Winograd Report called the war a “great and grave missed opportunity.”<sup>218</sup> It was clear that the IDF had not achieved the majority of its goals. Hezbollah continued to fire rockets until the very minute that the UN-brokered ceasefire went into effect on 14 August 2006, following the passing of UN Resolution 1701. Jonathan Spyer, a senior research fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs at IDC-Herzliya, claims that of the Israeli cabinet’s objectives for the war, only the deployment of the Lebanese Army along the Israeli border had been achieved. As called for by Resolution 1701, an enhanced UNIFIL (“UNIFIL II”) made up of 8,000 soldiers and the Lebanese Army regained control of southern Lebanon in October, for the first time since 2000.<sup>219</sup> Inbar notes that Resolution

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<sup>215</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Second Lebanon War (2006),” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>; Sundeep Waslekar and Ilmas Futehally, *Cost of Conflict in the Middle East* (Mumbai: Strategic Foresight Group, 2009), 103.

<sup>216</sup> Waslekar and Futehally, 103.

<sup>217</sup> International Crisis Group, “Israel/Hezbollah/Liban: Eviter un Regain de Violence,” [Israel/Hezbollah/Lebanon: Avoiding a Renewal of Violence] *Rapport Moyen-Orient No. 59* (1 November 2006): 5.

<sup>218</sup> “English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report,” *New York Times*, (30 January 2008) <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?pagewanted=1&r=1>

<sup>219</sup> Spyer, 4.

1701, though, was the first time in Israeli history that Israel called for UN Resolution to set a ceasefire.

The war was neither as quick nor as decisive as Israel had expected it to be; though the war came to a halt, there remained a widespread sense of surprise, confusion, and disappointment, though Israel should have learned from its failure in the First Lebanon War to restructure internal Lebanese politics that, as Efraim Inbar, Director of BESA, writes, “In the contemporary Middle East, though, force seldom creates a new political environment.”<sup>220</sup>

### **The Disproportionate Use of Force in the 2006 War**

Israeli military strategy against Hezbollah involved the use of disproportionate force. The goal of such a strategy was to inflict suffering upon Lebanon itself so as to compel it to finally reign in Hezbollah. Critiques of the war denounce the alleged excessive use of force. But according to the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IMFA), “The proportionality of Israel’s operation against Hizbullah in Lebanon must be measured in terms of the extent of the threat faced by Israel and the level of the confrontation.”<sup>221</sup> Therefore, the abduction and the attack of July 12<sup>th</sup> were the trigger, not the reason, for the military campaign, explains Cordesman. The Israeli retaliation was not a reaction only to the cross-border attack and the two

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<sup>220</sup> Inbar, 60.

<sup>221</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Behind the Headlines: A Measured Response to Hizbullah Missiles,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.



soldiers' kidnapping, but a reaction to the growing threat of Hezbollah who was dedicated to Israel's destruction.<sup>222</sup>

Also, while critics may view the war as excessive punishment because it destroyed civilian infrastructure, paralyzing Lebanese economy and society (such as roads, tunnels, the airport), the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website reasons: "Anything that facilitates and serves Hizbullah, in terms of the real and tangible threat it poses to Israel, is a legitimate target. For example, Beirut International Airport has served as a conduit for the transfer of weapons and the arrival of instructors from Iran. The bridges in northern and southern Lebanon serve as channels for transporting Hizbullah weapons and personnel. The same is true of the Beirut-Damascus Highway."<sup>223</sup>

Nonetheless, disproportionate retaliation was the rule of the game set by the IDF at the beginning of the war. Two months before the war, in a speech he gave in Washington, Olmert declared: "There are moments in the life of a nation when it is compelled to look directly into the face of reality and say 'no more!'"<sup>224</sup> Amir Peretz vowed to destroy Hezbollah and promised that Hassan Nasrallah "is going to get it so bad that he will never forget the name Amir Peretz."<sup>225</sup> He hoped to scare Hezbollah into thinking Israel really was "crazy."<sup>226</sup> Chief of Staff Halutz, promised that the IDF would "turn back the clock in Lebanon by 20 years" if Regev and

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<sup>222</sup> Cordesman, 13.

<sup>223</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Behind the Headlines: A Measured Response to Hizbullah Missiles," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

<sup>224</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 106.

<sup>225</sup> Dov Waxman, "Between Victory and Defeat: Israel after the War with Hizballah," *The Washington Quarterly* XXX:1 (Winter 2006-2007): 31.

<sup>226</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 81.

Goldwasser were not returned.<sup>227</sup> The boastful rhetoric promised a powerful, violent, and decisive victory that would not be merciful to civilians caught in the crossfire. From the start, Halutz and Peretz pressed for harsh responses that would create “new rules in the game.”<sup>228</sup>

The Israeli government announced that civilians would not be intentionally targeted, but in asymmetric warfare, civilians are the equivalent to the terrorist group’s armor. The IDF declared that if Lebanese civilians sheltered Hezbollah fighters, they would not be spared Israeli aerial counter-attacks. However, distinguishing between civilians and terrorist targets is nearly impossible when the fighters do not wear distinctive clothing, sometimes dress up with Israeli uniforms, and blend in with the local urban population.<sup>229</sup> Using civilians as their human shields, Hezbollah embedded its facilities amongst civilian towns, stored its weapons in civilian homes, and carried out its activities mirroring civilian life.<sup>230</sup> The IDF installed an alarm system allowing it to retaliate against rocket launchers very quickly. Retaliatory attacks harmed many civilians amongst which Hezbollah hid to protect itself.<sup>231</sup> Hezbollah fighters continuously moved from place to place, installing rocket launchers on civilians’ rooftops without their knowledge. When villages organized patrols to dissuade Hezbollah from firing from their buildings,

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<sup>227</sup> “Hezbollah Warns Israel Against Raids,” BBC NEWS, 12 July 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle\\_east/5173078.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/5173078.stm)

<sup>228</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 78.

<sup>229</sup> Steven Erlanger and Richard Opiel, Jr. “A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with its Tactics and Weapons,” *New York Times* (August 7, 2006).

<sup>230</sup> Cordesman, 10.

<sup>231</sup> Samy Cohen, 270.

witness accounts affirmed that Hezbollah fighters would prevent civilians from fleeing so as to not be faced with the Israeli retaliatory raid alone.<sup>232</sup>

A critical stage of the Israeli campaign was the bombing of Dahiya, the area of southern Beirut that housed the Hezbollah headquarters and Nasrallah's private home, only accessible by card-carrying Hezbollah members.<sup>233</sup> Even though Foreign Minister Livni and Minister of Internal Security Avi Dichter insisted that blasting away at Dahiya would likely harm civilians and thereby play into Hezbollah's hands and anger the international community, four of six ministers voted in favor of the bombing, not because they believed the bombing would do much physical damage to Hezbollah, but because, as Harel and Issacharoff explain, "Dahia was a symbol, and Israel's ministers and officers wanted a move that would deliver a painful surgical blow to Hezbollah's strength and honor."<sup>234</sup> The IAF began the bombing of Dahia on the evening of July 14, leveling multistory buildings housing Hezbollah command-and-control centers, the parts of the al-Manar television station that had still been standing, and turning the whole area into rubble.<sup>235</sup>

While the IDF claims it took care not to harm civilians, it failed to exercise caution and restraint, and instead caused devastating damage that is difficult to justify. The air campaign escalated against usually valid targets, but it often caused high levels of collateral damage. "The end result," writes Cordesman, "was to give the impression Israel was not providing a proportionate response."<sup>236</sup> The war

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<sup>232</sup> Samy Cohen, 271.

<sup>233</sup> Yaakov Katz, "Analysis: The Dahiya Doctrine vs. the Goldstone Report," *Jerusalem Post* (25 January 2010), <http://new.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=166546>.

<sup>234</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 100.

<sup>235</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 101.

<sup>236</sup> Cordesman, 14.

caused tremendous costs to many sectors of society including in human lives, education, agriculture, and the environment. After the first five days of the war, the number of Lebanese casualties had risen to 153.<sup>237</sup> According to an International Crisis Group study, in terms of the civilian population- 1,191 people (civilians and combatants) were killed, and several thousands wounded; almost one million people were displaced; 150, 000 houses were destroyed.<sup>238</sup> In addition to the deaths of civilians caught or forced into the fighting, civilians also died because of Israeli mistakes. On July 30, 2006, the IDF bombed a building in the village of Qana, unknowingly causing 28 deaths according to the International Red Cross. The IDF expressed its regret, stating it did not realize civilians, who had been warned of the imminent attack, were still living in the building.<sup>239</sup>

Education was affected by the war, as 300 Lebanese schools were damaged and 50 were destroyed completely, disrupting the education of 40,000 individuals.<sup>240</sup> Regarding commercial damage- some 900 factories, markets, farms, stores and other commercial buildings were destroyed. In terms of heavy important infrastructure- bridges, roads, the ports of Jounieh and Beirut in Christian territory, and Beirut's international airport's runways were destroyed.<sup>241</sup> As for agricultural costs, the leftover ammunition scattered in villages and fields in South Lebanon has created veritable minefields and rendered 25% of the southern Lebanese territory

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<sup>237</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 97.

<sup>238</sup> International Crisis Group, "Israel/Hezbollah/Liban: Eviter un Regain de Violence," 1.

<sup>239</sup> Samy Cohen, 272.

<sup>240</sup> Waslekar and Futehally, 77.

<sup>241</sup> International Crisis Group, "Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss," *Middle East Report No. 57* (25 July 2006): 14.

inaccessible and useless for farm work.<sup>242</sup> Three thousand and fifty heads of dairy cattle, 1,250 bulls, 15,000 goats and sheep, 18,000 beehives, and over 600,000 broiler chickens were lost as a direct consequence of the war.<sup>243</sup> This is very disruptive when 70% of the Southern Lebanese's income comes from work in agriculture. Overall, the Food and Agriculture Organization estimated the damaged to agriculture, forestry, and fishing to amount to \$280 million.<sup>244</sup> In addition, the destruction of irrigation systems and damage to canalization systems has damaged the water network, causing water-related diseases.<sup>245</sup> More environmental damage resulted from oil losses, including 100 kilometers of oil damage along the Lebanese coast, and 10,000-15,000 tons of oil spilled from damaged vessels and the Jiyeh oil plant near Beirut.<sup>246</sup> The war's direct and indirect economic costs were substantial, especially in South Lebanon. Total economic costs, including in transportation, electricity, health, education, fuel stations and the military amounted to \$ 3,612 million. Indirect cost of war was even harsher on the fiscal sector, with GDP growth ending the year in the red with a decline of 5%. According to a government report to the IMT, the decline in GDP represented a loss of \$2.2 billion. Public debt escalated to \$39.8 billion by the end of June 2007. The Ministry of Tourism estimated that the loss of tourism and hospitality, which usually account for 10-12 percent of the GDP, amounted to \$2 billion.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> International Crisis Group, "Israel/Hezbollah/Liban: Eviter un Regain de Violence," 4.

<sup>243</sup> Waslekar and Futehally, 57.

<sup>244</sup> Nimrod Raphaeli, "Lebanese Economy Between Violence and Political Stalemate," in ed. Rubin, 115.

<sup>245</sup> Waslekar and Futehally, 49.

<sup>246</sup> Waslekar and Futehally, 46.

<sup>247</sup> Raphaeli, in ed. Rubin, 114-117.

Despite the fact that it was Israel who initiated the war and that Israel enjoyed overwhelming military superiority during the Second Lebanon War, its overreliance on force and tactical mistakes cost it an inconclusive war that failed to achieve its objectives. The use of military force was unsatisfactory according to the Winograd Commission in charge of investigating and drawing lessons from the war.<sup>248</sup> “At the end of the day, Israel did not gain a political achievement because of military successes;” the Commission stated, “rather, it relied on a political agreement, which included positive elements for Israel, which permitted it to stop a war which it had failed to win.”<sup>249</sup> “The fact is that ultimate responsibility must lie with the political echelon for the failure to calibrate coherently military operations with political objectives,” writes Jonathan Spyer, senior research fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs Center at IDC-Herzliya.<sup>250</sup> The inconclusive results led Hezbollah to believe that it was the one who had won the war.

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<sup>248</sup> Surrendering to public and political pressure for an appointed state commission of inquiry on the war, Prime Minister Olmert selected Eliyahu Winograd, the former president of the Tel Aviv District Court, to head a government inquiry commission. The commission’s duty was to examine the management of the political echelons and the defense establishment during the war.

<sup>249</sup> New York Times, “English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report,” *New York Times* (30 January 2008), <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/world/middleeast/31winograd-web.html?pagewanted=1&r=1>.

<sup>250</sup> Spyer, 7.

## **Chapter Four: Consequences of Disproportionate Retaliation**

### **Results of the 2006 War and the Failure of Deterrence**

One of the aims of the Second Lebanon War was to restore deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah, which had eroded since the Israeli unilateral withdrawal in 2000, as demonstrated by the number of attacks against Israel since that period. It is argued that Israel's indecisive and mild responses to Hezbollah's continued attacks during that time period emboldened the organization.<sup>251</sup> The small provocations of Hezbollah between 2000 and 2006 were provocations that Hezbollah hoped Israel would accept, and thus lead to new rules of the deterrence game. Usually, writes Yair Evron, responses to provocations should be roughly proportionate to the damages caused by the violations. However, when repeated the challenger initiates limited challenges, disproportionate retaliation is necessary in order to restore deterrence.<sup>252</sup> The Second Lebanon War was therefore Israel's response to its self-perceived weakness and the growing danger of Hezbollah. Yet the Second Lebanon War failed to restore deterrence in the long term, for it failed to eliminate Hezbollah's motivation and capability to continue attacking Israel. If anything, the war emboldened the organization. Furthermore, Israel's reputation suffered a

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<sup>251</sup> Waxman, 29.

<sup>252</sup> Yair Evron, in ed. Brom and Meir, 39.

severe blow at the hands of harsh international criticism it drew as a result of the war. The use of disproportionate force in an attempt to restore deterrence made Israel look like the aggressor instead of the victim. It is clear that the development of the Second Lebanon War did not go as Israel had hoped. Not only did Israel fail to accomplish the goals it had set out for itself, but Hezbollah claimed victory.

Disproportionate retaliation is a military strategy which aims to restore deterrence vis-à-vis an adversary. However, it is clear that there is a gap between its logical theory and its practice and consequences. International law and political philosophy are two prisms through which the strategy of retaliation can be analyzed so as to better understand its origins and also its limits.

There exist conflicting views on the success of the campaign to restore deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah. On one hand, some argue that the war did succeed in intimidating Hezbollah. According to Shai Feldman, Director of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University, the “maximum” use of force employed by the Israeli Air Force succeeded in reminding Lebanon and the Arab world of its capacity to inflict a heavy punishment on states and states that allow others to attack Israel.<sup>253</sup> After all, for the last four years, the Lebanese-Israeli border has been quiet and residents of northern Israel have been able to live without fear of rocket attacks. Furthermore, if the enhanced UNIFIL and the South Lebanese Army successfully prevent and deter Hezbollah from carrying on its armed activities, Israel may be able to prove it has claim the war.<sup>254</sup> The freedom of movement which

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<sup>253</sup> Shai Feldman, “The Hezbollah-Israel War: A Preliminary Assessment,” *Middle East Brief No. 10* (The Crown Center for Middle East Studies: September 2006), 3.

<sup>254</sup> Cordesman, 6.



Hezbollah lost is very significant and it will hamper its remobilization in the south of Lebanon. But Hezbollah, contrary to Israel, is much more indifferent to these kinds of losses - the loss of fighters, weapons, and territory for example. In terms of these material costs, Hezbollah has lost a lot, but not enough to prevent it from resuming its attacks in the future. And unlike the Lebanese government, it is less sensitive to the pressure of public opinion and even less so to international public opinion.<sup>255</sup> However, since the beginning of the ceasefire, Hezbollah has respected Resolution 1701 despite what it perceived as Israeli provocations (i.e. kidnapping of Lebanese citizens, violation of Lebanese airspace).<sup>256</sup>

On the other hand, the public perception in Israel and in the world is that Israel lost the war. Because perception and deterrence are so intertwined, this widespread perception that the most powerful army in the region lost a war to a terrorist organization greatly diminished Israel's deterrence capabilities. According to Feldman, the erosion of Israeli deterrence following the war was due to two main issues. Firstly, Israel did not achieve its the goals: "Israel's execution of the war is being evaluated in not in terms of the actual strategic consequences of the confrontation but vis-à-vis the expectations that its civilian and military leaders created," Feldman writes.<sup>257</sup> Cordesman concurs, explaining that Israel went into war focused on its own perceptions and values, but not those of Hezbollah or Lebanon. Israel failed to understand that justifying the war, which it perceived as entirely just, to the outside world should have been an important part of its

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<sup>255</sup> Giora Eiland, "The Third Lebanon War," *Strategic Assessment 11:2* (November 2008): 15.

<sup>256</sup> International Crisis Group, "Israel/Hezbollah/Liban: Eviter un Regain de Violence," 10.

<sup>257</sup> Feldman, 3.

strategy.<sup>258</sup> Yet this gap in the perception of the war is precisely the trap of asymmetrical warfare: the terrorist organization operating from within civilian population centers lures the conventional army into harming the civilian population, for the more damage that army does, the more the state looks like a violent aggressor.

Because of this self-absorbed mindset, Hezbollah won the “war of the narratives,” which Feldman argues is the second reason for the widespread perception that Israel lost the war and failed to restore deterrence. First, it won the war of the narratives amongst Hezbollah and the Lebanese population. In front of an audience of millions of people in Beirut on September 23, 2006, Nasrallah declared the war a “strategic, historical, and divine victory.”<sup>259</sup> In contrast, at the beginning of the war, the Lebanese and Arab states were tired of Hezbollah and somewhat thankful that Israel would be dealing with the organization for them. As an official in the US Department of Defense said, according to Harel and Issacharoff’s *34 Days*, “Everyone hoped that Israel would do their work for them.”<sup>260</sup>

In addition, the extent of the destruction and violence taken against the Lebanese civilian population was supposed to turn the population against Hezbollah. However, while Hassan Fattah reported for the *New York Times* that many Lebanese felt bitter and angry towards Hezbollah because they felt the organization brought a war upon them they did not desire, it also made them and

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<sup>258</sup> Cordesman, 12.

<sup>259</sup> International Crisis Group, “Israel/Hezbollah/Liban: Eviter un Regain de Violence,” 9.

<sup>260</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 104.

the Arab world even more hostile to Israel.<sup>261</sup> Olmert had warned that if Israel crippled the Lebanese infrastructure, the residents of South Lebanon would be driven to embrace Hezbollah who would emerge as their national defender.<sup>262</sup> Amal Saad Ghorayeb, professor of political science at the Lebanese American University, reasoned: “You can bet that non-Shiites probably hate Hezbollah now. But those same people have also been reminded that Israel is the enemy.”<sup>263</sup> Ultimately, though, “the Lebanese directed their anger at Israel, because they did not understand why Lebanon’s destruction was an appropriate price to be paid for the abduction of two soldiers by Hezbollah,” writes Abdel Monem Said Aly at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University.<sup>264</sup>

Indeed, while Israel lost the hearts and minds of the Lebanese, Hezbollah won them in the immediate aftermath of the war. The bombing of the Dahiya quarter in Beirut and Hezbollah’s response of blowing up one of the Israeli navy’s most advanced missile boats, *Hanit*, with an Iranian-made C-802 shore-to-ship missile inspired respect for Hezbollah. Harel and Issacharoff relate an Arab journalist living in Beirut’s memories: “This was the turning point in Lebanese public opinion,” the journalist recalls, “We saw flames on the sea and realized like everyone else that he [Nasrallah] had spoken the truth [...] The targeting of the Israeli missile boat strengthened popular support of Hezbollah. In the following days, you sensed Lebanese solidarity: Sunnis hosted Shiite refugees; even Christians

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<sup>261</sup> Hassan Fattah, “Violence Opens Old Wounds From Lebanon’s Past,” *New York Times* (14 July 2006).

<sup>262</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 81.

<sup>263</sup> Hassan Fattah, “Violence Opens Old Wounds From Lebanon’s Past,” *New York Times* (14 July 2006).

<sup>264</sup> Said Aly, 3.

in wealthy neighborhoods treated Shiites cordially. Suddenly there was a feeling of national pride in Hezbollah, which had stood up to Israel and bloodied her.”<sup>265</sup> Historian William Harris also argues this point, writing that the assault on the airport and the mounting civilian deaths in the Shi’ah towns “brought a general ‘street’ coalescence with Hizballah.”<sup>266</sup> Dov Waxman, visiting scholar at BESA, writes, “In a country long divided by sectarianism, hatred of Israel became the one issue on which the Lebanese united.”<sup>267</sup> Robert Forth reports for the *International Herald Tribune*: “The flags and the continuing presence of Israeli soldiers here have further angered villagers already stunned by the extent of the Israeli bombing. Even some Christians, whose villages were largely spared the destruction visited on Shiite areas, say the war has fueled their support for Hezbollah.”<sup>268</sup> “They destroyed our school in the village, but we will teach the children under the trees,” said Srour, the schoolteacher. “And we will teach them to hate Israel and love the resistance.”<sup>269</sup> Overall, Lebanon became more actively hostile to Israel following the war. And according to Soli Ozel, former editor of the Turkish edition of *Foreign Policy*, following the war, the Lebanese people and the government became in turn more open to Hezbollah.<sup>270</sup>

Second, on a regional scale, the anger the destruction generated weakened moderate Arab people and regimes such as Jordan or Egypt, and reinforced radical

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<sup>265</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 101-102.

<sup>266</sup> Harris, in ed. Rubin, 74.

<sup>267</sup> Waxman, 32.

<sup>268</sup> Robert F. Worth, “Lebanon's Uneasy Truce Grows More Fragile,” *International Herald Tribune* (31 August 2006).

<sup>269</sup> Robert F. Worth, “Lebanon's Uneasy Truce Grows More Fragile,” *International Herald Tribune* (31 August 2006).

<sup>270</sup> Soli Ozel, “Prelude to War or Diplomacy? Reflections on the Sixth War,” *Middle East Program Occasional Papers* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars: Fall 2006).

ones. Syria celebrated Hezbollah's continued attacks on Israel during the war. Pop radio stations played military marches, the state-run newspaper expressed Damascus's "firm stance in support of the Lebanese national resistance," and ordinary Syrians expressed their pride of Nasrallah as the only Arab leader capable of resisting Israel, reports *The New York Times*.<sup>271</sup> The moderate Arab Quartet- Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf emirates- were concerned about Iran's intentions of exporting the Islamic revolution moreso than Hezbollah. Their diplomats sharply told an Israeli official: "Finish with them now and get it over with as quickly as possible."<sup>272</sup> But Hezbollah emerged from the war as the model of violent, uncompromising, and Islamically-inspired resistance. Though some Arab states, such as Egypt and Jordan, initially condemned Hezbollah's actions as harmful to Arab interests in the region, they criticized Israel more strongly, unable to openly and strongly confront the organization.<sup>273</sup> The inertia of the moderate Arab states in the war and their inability to be a strong public voice opposing Israel gave legitimacy to Hezbollah who appeared to be the only one able to confront Israel. The victory that Hezbollah boasted could give the rising Islamic radicalism in the region a boost in its struggle for power with moderate Arab politics. By escalating the conflict and failing to prove that it was controlling civilian casualties and collateral

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<sup>271</sup> Katherine Zoepf, "Spirits are High in Syria's Capital as Leaders Openly Show Support for Hezbollah," *New York Times* (16 July 2006).

<sup>272</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, 104.

<sup>273</sup> "Hezbollah's Staying Power: An Assessment," A Saban Center Policy Luncheon, Brookings Institution, Washington D.C. 30 April 2007.

<http://www.brookings.edu/events/2007/0430terrorism.aspx>; BBC, "In quotes: Lebanon reaction," *BBC News* (13 July 2006), [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5175886.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5175886.stm).

damage, Israel alienated even those countries that disliked Hezbollah, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>274</sup>

Thirdly, of more specific and greater concern, the perception that Israel lost the war emboldened Iran. Former political science professor at Tehran University Hadi Semati writes: “The Israeli blunder in the recent war with Hizbullah, and the perception by the Muslim world that for the first time the Israeli army did not perform well has reinforced the self-confidence of Iran to project itself in the region.”<sup>275</sup>

In terms of capabilities, Israel failed to prevent Hezbollah from rearming and rebuilding what it had lost in the war. Though the war definitely damaged Hezbollah’s capabilities temporarily, the organization was able to quickly reconstitute its arsenal. One year after the war, while the presence of the SLA and UNIFIL along the Israeli-Lebanese border certainly hampered Hezbollah’s activities, it failed to prevent the organization from replenishing its stocks. In fact, despite the fact that Israel’s artillery fired over 180,000 shells and hundreds of Multiple Launch Rocket System rockets at South Lebanon, Hezbollah has been able to build medium- and long-range missiles north of the Litani River;<sup>276</sup> it has tripled, according to IDF estimates, its number of C-802 land-to-sea missiles; and it has created an anti-aircraft unit.<sup>277</sup> Furthermore, according to Cordesman, Israeli intelligence detected that they had tracked the deployment of around 13, 000 Katyusha rockets,

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<sup>274</sup> Cordesman, 13.

<sup>275</sup> Hadi Semati, “Rising Power: Domestic and Strategic Factors of the Iran-Hizbullah Connection and their Regional Implications,” *Occasional Paper Series* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars: Fall 2006): 14.

<sup>276</sup> Romm, in ed. Brom and Meir, 54.

<sup>277</sup> Spyer, 7.

sophisticated Iranian medium-and long-range artillery rockets, Zelzal-3 guided missiles, surface-to-air missiles such as the SA-14 and SA-16, anti-ship missiles and anti-tank weapons such as the AT-3 Sagger Two and the Kornet.<sup>278</sup> In December 2008, the Lebanese Army found eight Katyusha rockets ready to be fired in a forest between Nakoura and Tyre, less than five kilometers from the Israeli border. This was the first time that rockets had been found since the end of the 2006 War.<sup>279</sup> This failure to prevent Hezbollah from rearming was due to the IDF's inability to deter Syria and Iran, Hezbollah's main arms providers, from resupplying the organization.<sup>280</sup> Critics of the war claim that Israel neglected to address the root cause of the Hezbollah problem- Syria and Iran- and that a strike on Hezbollah's suppliers would be a more efficient way of halting Hezbollah's attacks. And because neither the Lebanese government nor the UNIFIL considers the disarmament of Hezbollah part of their mandate, Hezbollah can resupply quite freely.<sup>281</sup> Sobelman writes, "The organization's newly-gained military empowerment is a key factor in preventing the banishment of Lebanon's Shiite community to the political backwaters where it had long been relegated."<sup>282</sup>

Deterrence is a game of perceptions- Israel's goal in this case was to instill fear of the IDF in the eyes of Hezbollah- but Hezbollah was not intimidated. In terms of motivation, the war failed to diminish Hezbollah's reason and motivation to

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<sup>278</sup> Cordesman, 16.

<sup>279</sup> "Le Finul renforce son controle au Liban sud," *Le Monde* (28 December 2008), [http://www.lemonde.fr/web/recherche\\_breve/1,13-0,37-1064076,0.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/web/recherche_breve/1,13-0,37-1064076,0.html)

<sup>280</sup> Cordesman, 12.

<sup>281</sup> Haleh Esfandiari, "A View from the Region: Different Perspectives on Israel's War with Lebanon's Hezbollah," *Occasional Paper Series* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars: Fall 2006): 3.

<sup>282</sup> Sobelman, 84.

pursue its struggle against Israel. It continued to shell northern Israel until the last minutes of the war before the ceasefire took effect. Religiously and ideologically-driven, Hezbollah does not perceive the ceasefire to be an everlasting agreement of peace, and though it accepted the deployment of Lebanese troops in South Lebanon, it refuses to disarm in the name of resistance against Israel. On one hand, it is logical to assume that the greater the punitive capacity of the deterrer, the more effective its deterrent threats could be. Applied to this case, this means that the more powerful Israel is, the more easily it should be able to deter Hezbollah, for Hezbollah would fear Israel's military might. On the other hand, however, the greater the frustration of the challenger (Hezbollah) with the status quo, the greater is its willingness to challenge it despite the costs.<sup>283</sup> In this case, Hezbollah proved that it had the capabilities and the motivation to face Israel's superior conventional military forces, even though it did not expect it when it kidnapped the Israeli soldiers in July 2006. "The ultimate proof of deterrence success," writes Yair Evron, "is when an explicit deterrent threat has caused the challenger to abandon a specific decision to initiate hostilities."<sup>284</sup> It is important to note, then, that the Second Lebanon War was the first war in which the belligerent (Hezbollah here) did not ask for a cease-fire to end the fighting.

Israel's northern front has been calm since the 2006 War. Hezbollah is concerned with its status amongst the Lebanese, and if it wishes to secure its power in Lebanese politics, it must keep in check its belligerence towards Israel. Israel damaged Nasrallah's efforts to be the caring representative and fighter for the Shi'ah

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<sup>283</sup> Yair Evron, "Deterrence and its Limitations," in ed. Brom and Elran, 35.

<sup>284</sup> Evron, in ed. Brom and Elran, 36.



underdogs of Lebanon. The destruction and casualties of another war caused could cost Nasrallah in terms of popular support. But this deterrence is limited. Ultimately, the Shi'ah community has no real choice but to gather around Nasrallah, for no one else has yet proven that they will stand up to defend it. Nasrallah must then tread lightly to regain the public support he had successfully been building up before the war. But Hezbollah will continue to control South Lebanon and will continue to rebuild its weaponry. It is for fear of losing status and power amongst the Lebanese that Hezbollah currently refrains from attacking Israel, not because it has been checkmated.

### **The Diplomatic Consequences of the Excessive Use of Force**

Israel's actions in the war against Hezbollah sparked strong reactions from around the world. On one hand, American president at the time, George W. Bush, solidly supported Israel, which he claimed had a right to defend itself. So though he called upon Israel to be wary of weakening the Lebanese government, he also stated: "People need to protect themselves. There are terrorists who will blow up innocent people in order to achieve tactical objectives." He and then- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice blamed Syria for sheltering Hezbollah's leaders.<sup>285</sup>

On the other hand, France, the European Union, and several non-governmental organizations released statements calling Israel's actions such as the naval blockade of Lebanon and the bombing of the Beirut airport a "disproportionate use of force" in retaliation for Hezbollah's rockets across the

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<sup>285</sup> Jim Rutenberg, "Bush Gives Qualified Support for Israel's Strikes," *New York Times* (14 July 2006).

Israeli-Lebanese border.<sup>286</sup> “The presidency deplores the loss of civilian lives and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The imposition of an air and sea blockade on Lebanon cannot be justified,” the European Union stated.<sup>287</sup>

Harsh criticism of Israel also came from the UN. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006, then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called for the immediate release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers and condemned “without reservations” the Israeli attack on South Lebanon.<sup>288</sup> On July 13<sup>th</sup>, the UN Security Council attempted to pass a resolution drafted by Qatar that would accuse Israel of “disproportionate retaliation.” The American ambassador, John Bolton, vetoed the resolution, preventing it from passing.<sup>289</sup> Kofi Annan declared: “While Hezbollah's actions are deplorable, and as I've said, Israel has a right to defend itself, the excessive use of force is to be condemned.”<sup>290</sup> On July 18<sup>th</sup>, Kofi Annan and then- British Prime Minister Tony Blair called for a cessation of hostilities and a larger UN unit to be dispatched so as assist the existing 2,000 blue helmets attempting to stabilize the situation.<sup>291</sup> The UN's emergency relief coordinator accused Israel of breaking humanitarian law with its bombing of Lebanon.<sup>292</sup> “Indiscriminate shelling of cities constitutes a foreseeable and unacceptable targeting of civilians,” said Louise Arbour, the UN's high

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<sup>286</sup> Steven Erlanger, “With Israeli Use of Force, Debate over Proportionality,” *New York Times* (19 July 2006).

<sup>287</sup> BBC, “In quotes: Lebanon reaction,” *BBC News* (13 July 2006), [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5175886.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5175886.stm).

<sup>288</sup> Ynet News, “Annan condemns Israel attack in Lebanon,” *Ynet News* (12 July 2006), <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3274607,00.html>.

<sup>289</sup> *New York Times*, “US Vetoes Criticism of Israel,” *New York Times* (14 July 2006).

<sup>290</sup> “Annan demands Lebanon ceasefire,” *BBC News* (20 July 2006), [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5199088.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5199088.stm).

<sup>291</sup> Hassan Fattah and Warren Hoge, “UN Force in Lebanon Offers Harsh Realities and Lessons,” *New York Times* (19 July 2006).

<sup>292</sup> EuroNews, “Diplomatic Flurry in Israel over Lebanon War,” *EuroNews* (23 July 2006), <http://www.euronews.net/2006/07/23/diplomatic-flurry-in-israel-over-lebanon-war/>.

commissioner for human rights, in a statement. “Similarly,” she added, “the bombardment of sites with alleged innocent civilians is unjustifiable.”<sup>293</sup> The International Red Cross also stated that Israel had violated the principle of proportionality provided for in the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols. The Red Cross also noted that Hezbollah was also bound by international humanitarian law and warned it must not target civilians.<sup>294</sup>

The Israeli Army fell into the trap of overemphasizing demonstrations of military force to strengthen deterrence. Instead, the use of disproportionate force turned the Lebanese civilian population and the international community against it, thereby boosting the enemy – Hezbollah’s- confidence, credibility, and respect.

A war on terror, such as Israel’s fight against Hezbollah, presents states with unavoidable choices: harming some to save others, harming the innocent to trap the guilty, deceiving some to entrap others.<sup>295</sup> Machiavelli famously postulated that the moral qualities which we admire in private life do not necessarily apply practically to public life.<sup>296</sup> All political life indeed entails difficult choices between varying degrees of “evil” options.<sup>297</sup> In other words, political choices are rarely a question of choosing between good and bad options; usually, they involve choosing the “lesser evil” option, or the “least worst” course of action. Faced with terrorism, democracies have two choices: they can strictly respect the laws of war, which, being so restrictive, would make their attaining their goal of beating the terrorists very

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<sup>293</sup> Warren Hoge, “Attacks Qualify As War Crimes, Officials Say,” *New York Times* (20 July 2006).

<sup>294</sup> Warren Hoge, “Attacks Qualify As War Crimes, Officials Say,” *New York Times* (20 July 2006).

<sup>295</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *The Lesser Evil* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 14.

<sup>296</sup> Machiavelli’s postulates that a politician who may condemn killing in private must also order his forces to kill the enemy’s troops en masse. His private values cannot translate into his public life values.

<sup>297</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1977), 44-45.

difficult; or they can fight in the urban areas used a shields by the terrorist organization, and risk violating international law and human rights, and provoke a chain of negative consequences. Democracies tend to almost always accept the latter option as the better of two unsatisfactory choices.<sup>298</sup> Democracies, Samy Cohen maintains, have a duty to maintain a balance between the efficacy of their fight against terrorism and a respect for international law and human rights.<sup>299</sup>

### **Retaliation and International Law**

One prism through which to analyze the right to self-defense and retaliation is international humanitarian law (IHL). IHL is the body of international law that regulates the conduct of armed conflict, consisting of several treaties negotiated over the 20<sup>th</sup> century to which states are bound. Its purpose is to limit and prevent human suffering in times of war.<sup>300</sup>

International law provides each state with the right to self-defense, enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter adopted in 1945: “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”<sup>301</sup> Yet, simultaneously, international law calls for distinction and proportionality in warfare, with regard to both *jus a bellum* (the justification for

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<sup>298</sup> Samy Cohen, ed. 4.

<sup>299</sup> Samy Cohen, ed., 9.

<sup>300</sup> International Bar Association’s Task Force on International Terrorism, *International Terrorism: Legal Challenges and Responses* (New York: Transnational Publishers, 2003), 91.

<sup>301</sup> *Charter of the United Nations* <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>

war) and *jus in bello* (justice in war), notably in relation to the causation of civilian deaths and damages.<sup>302</sup> Thus, “the principle of proportionality represents a compromise between the desire to protect civilians and the demands of military necessity.”<sup>303</sup>

IHL relating to civilians can be separated into two parts. The first is the principle of distinction. This principle, which forms the cornerstone of international law, prohibits the intentional attack of civilians. The second, and more controversial aspect, is the principle of proportionality. This principle refers to the unintentional attacks of civilians.<sup>304</sup>

The principle of distinction in IHL originated with the 1907 Hague Conventions which govern the laws of war. Later on, article 49 of the International Law Commission’s *Draft Articles on State Responsibility* of 1980 codified the rule, setting limits to countermeasures states could take in response to aggression.<sup>305</sup> The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law.<sup>306</sup> They prohibit military reprisals that intentionally inflict collective punishment against civilian populations as well as target nonmilitary targets. Article 3, common to all four Conventions, covers situations of non-international armed conflicts such as civil wars and internal armed conflicts. It

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<sup>302</sup> Andreas Zimmermann, “The Second Lebanon War: *Jud ad bellum*, *Jus in bello*, and the Issue of Proportionality,” *Yearbook of United National Law* 11, No. 11 (2007), 102.

<sup>303</sup> Hamutal Esther Shamash, “How Much is Too Much- An Examination of the Principle of Jus in Bello Proportionality,” *IDF Law Review* 2 (2005-2006), 106.

<sup>304</sup> Shamash, 113.

<sup>305</sup> International Law Commission, 53<sup>rd</sup> session, *Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts*, November 2001

<sup>306</sup> The Geneva Conventions are a set of four treaties that address humanitarian issues of civilians and combatants in war. They were revised in 1949, and include two additional Protocols from 1977 and one additional Protocol from 2005.

condenses the rules of the Conventions and makes them applicable to the non-international scale. *Inter alia*, Article 3 requires the protection of civilians, as it reads: “Persons taking no active part in the hostilities [...] shall in all circumstances be treated humanely [...].”<sup>307</sup> Additional Protocol II adopted in 1977 strengthens the protections beyond the standards of Article 3. Not only does it protect non-combatants, but it also prohibits “collective punishments” and attacks on civilian populations. Article 13 reads: “The civilian population as such as well as individual citizens, shall not be the object of attack.” In addition, Article 14 protects any objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as crops, agricultural areas, or drinking water installations.<sup>308</sup> Finally, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of 1998 defines as “war crimes” intentionally attacking the civilian population, land, and infrastructure.<sup>309</sup>

The rule of proportionality determines the legitimacy of the collateral civilian damage caused by the attack on the military target.<sup>310</sup> The Statute of the ICC and customary international law only criminalize such measures committed with the knowledge that the measure will cause incidental civilian damage. Even when a target is military, a risk to civilians may still exist. The rule of proportionality

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<sup>307</sup> Diplomatic Conference for the Establishment of International Conventions for the Protection of Victims of War, Article 3.1 in “Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,” 12 August 1949.

<sup>308</sup> ICRC, “Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II),” 8 June 1977, 1125 UNTS 609, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b37f40.html>.

<sup>309</sup> Article 8 (b), *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 17 July 1998; Though it signed the Statute in 2000, Israel withdrew its signature in August 2002. Please see “Ratifications and Declaration,” American Non-Governmental Organizations Coalition for the International Criminal Court, 2002 [http://www.amicc.org/icc\\_ratifications.html#\\*](http://www.amicc.org/icc_ratifications.html#*)

<sup>310</sup> Shamash, 114.

requires the balancing of possible civilian damage against military advantage.<sup>311</sup>

However, placing civilian damage on one side of the equation, and military advantage on the other is not simple. In fact, other factors affect both those weights: the density of a civilian area, unintended side effects of a weapon on one hand for example, or the value of long term military advantages versus short term military advantages. These factors all determine proportionality or disproportionality, but are all subject to interpretation.<sup>312</sup>

Israel ratified the Geneva Conventions in 1951.<sup>313</sup> However, it is not a contracting party to the First Additional Protocol of 1977, which is the only protocol which specifically regulates proportionality.<sup>314</sup> Yet, regardless of whether states signed and ratified the Conventions, the principles of distinction and proportionality in warfare are part of customary international law. Customary law, according to the American Law Institute, refers to a “general and consistent practice of states followed by them from a sense of legal obligation.” They are “intended for adherence by states generally and are in fact widely accepted.”<sup>315</sup> Even if Israel has objected to certain elements of customary international law, Israel maintains itself that the principle of proportionality does apply in armed conflict. The IDF military manual

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<sup>311</sup> Zimmermann, 131.

<sup>312</sup> Shamash, 118-121.

<sup>313</sup> “Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,” International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 2005, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/WebSign?ReadForm&id=375&ps=P>

<sup>314</sup> Zimmermann, 127.

<sup>315</sup> For the complete text, please see American Law Institute, *Restatement of the Law, Third, the Foreign Relations Law of the United States* (St. Paul, Minn.: American Law Institute Publishers, 1987) §102(2) and (3). Information about Customary Law can also be found at: Sahl Silke, “Researching Customary International Law, State Practice and the Pronouncements of States regarding International Law,” June/July 2007, [http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/customary\\_international\\_law.htm#\\_What\\_is\\_Customary](http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/customary_international_law.htm#_What_is_Customary). See also Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

also calls upon military leaders to exercise restraint when anticipated damage to civilian areas would be excessive compared to the anticipated military advantage.<sup>316</sup>

Legal scholars accused Israel of violating IHL- in terms of both the principle of distinction and the rule of proportionality- in the Second Lebanon War for targeting civilian infrastructure and excessively retaliating upon military targets. On the first count, critics draw attention to the attacks on the oil refineries, and water and electricity facilities located outside of the immediate combat-zone of South Lebanon.<sup>317</sup> On the second count, critics cite the bombing of the Dahiya quarter in Beirut, and recall that an attack upon a military target is illegal if the anticipated civilian damages outweigh the military advantages.

Israel claims that its countermeasures were within the bounds of *jus ad bello* and *jus in bello*, or self-defense, which is its right and responsibility according to Article 51 of the UN Charter. Israel argues that it exercised *jus ad bello*. Hezbollah's attacks, over the years, had cost Israeli civilian and military lives, caused civilian damages, and constituted a pervasive threat to civilian well-being on the northern front. Retaliation was, Israel argues, well within its right to self-defense.

Furthermore, Israel argues that its military actions were in line with *jus in bello*. Civilian infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and airports, become military targets when used by the enemy. This is true according to the International Committee of the Red Cross's list of categories of possible military objectives in war

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<sup>316</sup> Zimmermann, 130.

<sup>317</sup> Zimmermann, 135.



in 1956.<sup>318</sup> Taking its military retaliation further than South Lebanon was necessary because Hezbollah centers existed there. Weapons, Israel claimed, entered Lebanon via the airport and roads from Syria. Therefore, Israel had the right to attack Hezbollah targets and means of transportation. Private homes, if used for military purposes by the enemy, were also legitimate targets.

The right to self-defense and the restrictions in warfare due to international laws of retaliation and proportionality are difficult to gauge and apply on the ground in war. The principle of proportionality is open to interpretation and debate. Much depends on the specifics of each situation of conflict. Originally, though, they derive from a philosophical debate about rights, responsibilities, and morality in warfare.

### **Morality in Warfare**

A second possible framework in which it is possible to think about military strategy, deterrence, and the Second Lebanon War is that of ethics and moral political philosophy. Historically, political philosophers have developed paradigms and theories about morality and ethics in warfare that have shifted in response to changing values and technological, social, political, and cultural innovations.<sup>319</sup> Therefore, the just war theory, dealing with the reason for war (*jus ad bello*) and conduct in it (*jus in bello*), has been interpreted in diverse ways. All interpretations, however, assume that, in the absence of “a superior authority capable of peacefully resolving disputes, a political entity may legitimately employ some measure of force,

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<sup>318</sup> Heike Krieger, *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law: An Analytical Documentation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 345.

<sup>319</sup> William E. Murnion, “A Postmodern View of Just War,” in ed. Steven P. Lee, *Intervention, Terrorism, and Torture: Contemporary Challenges to Just War Theory* (The Netherlands: Springer, 2007), 23.

either in self-defense or for the protection of other (innocent) victims of (unjust) aggression.”<sup>320</sup> Precisely because of the just war ethic’s adaptability, it remains an irreplaceable- and in fact the prime- framework for assessing warfare.<sup>321</sup> Indeed, it is impossible to think of the morality of war in any way except the just war theory: the two criteria of justice for war, and justice in war demand the answers to the unavoidable questions of “what are the grounds for going to war, if any?” and “what are the procedures to be followed in combat, if any?”<sup>322</sup>

Two disparate categories of moral reasoning that answer these questions are absolutism and utilitarianism.<sup>323</sup> Absolutism holds that certain actions in war are absolutely out of bounds, and that the prohibition of these actions should be infeasible, without exception. Absolutism places importance in one’s actual actions, rather than the outcome of one’s actions. Accordingly, absolutism in the context of warfare restricts to whom violence may be directed and the manner of the attack.<sup>324</sup> It stipulates that hostility should be directed only towards the appropriate persons and towards its true cause.<sup>325</sup> As a more moderate approach, in terms of warfare, absolutism claims that the deliberate killing of the innocent is murder.<sup>326</sup> The innocent, in the context of war, refer to the noncombatants.<sup>327</sup> This approach therefore denies any “middle ground” because morality is non-negotiable

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<sup>320</sup> For a recapitulation of the development of just war theory, see William. E. Murnion, “A Postmodern View of Just War,” in ed. Steven P. Lee, *Intervention, Terrorism, and Torture: Contemporary Challenges to Just War Theory* (The Netherlands: Springer, 2007).

<sup>321</sup> Murnion, in ed. Lee, 23; 34.

<sup>322</sup> Murnion, in ed. Lee, 35.

<sup>323</sup> Thomas Nagel, “War and Massacre,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, Number 2 (Winter 1972), 124.

<sup>324</sup> Nagel, 133.

<sup>325</sup> Nagel, 135.

<sup>326</sup> Nagel, 139.

<sup>327</sup> For a discussion of the use of the terms “innocent” and “noncombatant,” see Nagel, 139-142.

and innocence is inviolable. Therefore, protecting the innocent is acting justly, and since justice is incomparable to anything else, we must act justly no matter the consequences: *fiat justitia, ruat caelum*- do justice even if the heavens fall).

According to absolutism, thus, “innocent human beings can never be intentionally attacked. Innocence is their shield, and though it is only a verbal shield, a paper shield, no defense at all against bombs and bullets, it is impenetrable to moral argument.”<sup>328</sup>

The opposite philosophical moral argument is utilitarianism, which posits that cost-benefit analysis should override morality in warfare. Accordingly, innocence is only one value that must be weighed in comparison with other values in order to arrive at course of action that will be the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Thomas Nagel, American professor of law and philosophy at New York University, explains: “The policy of attacking civilians in order to induce an enemy to surrender, or to damage his morale seems to have been widely accepted in the civilized world, at least if the stakes are high enough.”<sup>329</sup> In this case, we must find a way of measuring the cost of innocent lives. Furthermore, usually, in these estimations, we tend to exaggerate our benefit, and minimize the enemy’s cost. In utilitarianism, no enemy life, whether combatant or not, has any value. According to utilitarians, the utilitarian rules of war are rational, for they are “utility-maximizing” rules of war for states at war.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Walzer, *Arguing About War* (New Haven, CT: Princeton University Press, 2004), 35.

<sup>329</sup> Nagel, 127.

<sup>330</sup> R.B. Brandt, “Utilitarianism and the Rules of War,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, No. 2 (Winter 1972), 149; 150.

Yet it is not because rules are “utility-maximizing” that they allow any actions. For while civilian lives have no special value, for instance, the mistreatment of murder of the enemy’s civilians may very well bring one no benefit. It may, on the contrary, be harmful, by fostering resentment, for example. Utility may be thus maximized by taking good measures towards the enemy’s civilians.<sup>331</sup> A more complicated scenario arises, however, when actions may be utility-maximizing and create the possibility of winning the war, but also cause great harm to the civilian population. A utilitarian approach to this dilemma would disregard the harm caused to civilians.

While absolutism and utilitarianism’s dichotomy can be attenuated, it is not possible to abolish it, according to Walzer.<sup>332</sup> In the end, Walzer argues that absolutism is unrealistic, and utilitarianism is weak. There are views in between these polar views according to which violence may be undertaken under certain circumstances and within certain limits.

Michael Walzer puts forth a modern “just war” theory. It is the traditional approach taken to questions of the morality of war, providing rules for determining when it is justified to fight a war and how. Walzer argues that political leaders who are faced with the choice of risking the security of their nation must not devalue the rights of the enemy in order to further the well-being of their nation, or their “just cause.” Devaluing the enemy’s rights in order to protect one’s own rights is only

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<sup>331</sup> Brandt, 155.

<sup>332</sup> Walzer, *Arguing About War*, 35.

permitted in “extreme cases” in which an imminent horrific result can only be avoided by way of the denial of people’s rights.<sup>333</sup>

Shabtai Shavit, head of Mossad under Yitzhak Rabin, said, “given a choice between being less diplomatic and surviving, and dying democratically, I prefer the first [option]. And in the intellectual discussion of the democratic dilemma we ultimately reach this point, and we must face up to it.”<sup>334</sup> Similarly, Patrick Hubbard, Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of South Carolina School of Law, argues that Walzer’s argument fails to take into account the reality of the pressure to safeguard their citizens that political leaders are under. Leaders unavoidably devalue the enemy’s citizens in order to protect their own.<sup>335</sup> Leaders feel responsible towards their national interests and are obligated, sometimes, to do wicked things which, detached from their duty, they would clearly view as immoral.<sup>336</sup>

Michael Ignatieff, Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, in *A Lesser Evil*, presents how a democracy can opt for an appropriate “lesser evil” response in fighting terrorism, without committing the “greater evil” of value-free nihilism used by terrorists. Ignatieff does not see two opposite courses of action a state may take when faced with terrorism- that is, preserving one’s security at all costs which he calls “cynicism,” or strictly adhering to moral values at any cost which Ignatieff dubs “moral perfectionism”; instead, he

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<sup>333</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument With Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 231-232.

<sup>334</sup> Ganor, 166.

<sup>335</sup> Patrick Hubbard, “Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars*,” in ed. Lee, 56.

<sup>336</sup> Hubbard, in ed. Lee, 69.

envisions a spectrum on which are situated various degrees of “evils,” some lesser and some greater than others.

A lesser evil position posits that in a terrorist emergency, neither (human, civil) rights nor military necessity should override the other.<sup>337</sup> The position is a balancing act, balancing out risk, dignity, and security, because it refuses to privilege one value over others. “Even extreme necessity, however,” writes Ignatieff, “cannot override democratic processes and the obligation to balance strong measures with basic commitments to full public justification.”<sup>338</sup> The democratic state, faced with several choices, none of which are ideal and all of which contain some degree of “evil,” must “succeed in choosing lesser evils and keep them from becoming greater ones.”<sup>339</sup> The war on terrorism puts a strain on morality and democracy because it uses means that are at the edge of morality and law. Indeed, “a war on terror,” Ignatieff writes, “is not just a challenge to democracy; it is an interrogation of the vitality of its capability for adversarial review.”<sup>340</sup> Faced with various courses of actions, the state must come to “a rational judgment of which course of action is likely to inflict the least damage on the two principles [the conservative principle, i.e. maintaining the free institutions we have, and the dignity principle, i.e. preserving individuals from gross harm].”<sup>341</sup>

The lesser evil stance is antiperfectionist in its assumptions: it accepts that it is sometimes necessary to kill some in order to save others, for instance. But it also

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<sup>337</sup> Ignatieff, 8.

<sup>338</sup> Ignatieff, 10.

<sup>339</sup> Ignatieff, 18.

<sup>340</sup> Ignatieff, 12.

<sup>341</sup> Ignatieff, 18.

counts upon the obligation of democracies to justify their actions, and the strength of leaders' individual conscience. It also calls upon international human rights instruments to set and interpret standards of responsibility and rights in warfare. "Far from making ethical reflection irrelevant," Ignatieff argues, "these dilemmas make ethical realism all the more essential to democratic reflection and good public policy."<sup>342</sup>

It is clear from the example of the Second Lebanon War that the use of disproportionate force against a non-state actor does not always succeed in restoring deterrence. In fact, diplomatic isolation and the delegitimization of the state's struggle against terrorism are its harsh negative consequences. But it is important to acknowledge that war today is far from traditional. It has been affected by social and technological changes, including organized terrorism or military technology. Some argue that the nature of contemporary war, of which asymmetrical warfare is one example, renders the traditional rules of war and morality in warfare obsolete. Some argue that terrorism, for instance, forces us to cross the limits set by the traditional rules of morality in warfare.<sup>343</sup> International humanitarian law is very strict, and arguably impossible to abide by in asymmetric war against a terrorist organization and still win the conflict. Moral political philosophy provides a more flexible prism through which to analyze the concepts of retaliation and proportionality.

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<sup>342</sup> Ignatieff, 21.

<sup>343</sup> For a collection of essays exploring the relevancy and application of just war theory to modern warfare, see ed. Steven P. Lee, *Intervention, Terrorism, and Torture: Contemporary Challenges to Just War Theory* (The Netherlands: Springer, 2007).

## Conclusion

Disproportionate retaliation, violently striking both combatants and non-combatants when it is impossible to strike one without striking the other, as it has been demonstrated, is an essential element in Israel's strategy of deterrence vis-à-vis non-state actors (though it is not specific to Israel's strategy in asymmetrical warfare). It is "a set of beliefs, attitudes, and practices concerning the use of force to which almost all of Israel's civil and military leaders have adhered."<sup>344</sup> It is the military way of demonstrating resolve and efficiency in order to establish cumulative deterrence.

The consequences of this strategy, which include strained relations with the Arab world, diplomatic difficulties with world powers, and the delegitimization of Israel's own struggle against terror currently seem to be of second importance. Indeed, in 2008, Major General Gadi Eisenkot, head of the IDF's Northern Command, warned that in any future war, the IDF would use "disproportionate" force to destroy Lebanese villages from which rockets were fired. "We will apply disproportionate force on it (village) and cause great damage and destruction there. From our standpoint, these are not civilian villages, they are military bases,"

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<sup>344</sup> Samy Cohen, 258.



Eisenkot told an Israeli newspaper.<sup>345</sup> After Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009 that the IDF would continue to use the “Dahiya doctrine,” targeting civilian infrastructure used by terrorists.

Yet while this kind of traditional cumulative deterrence has proven successful in being able to deter states from launching direct attacks on Israel, this level of success is not so obvious for Israel’s ongoing deterrence against non-state actors. The deterrence theory elaborated at the beginning of this paper deals with conventional warfare- two or more states facing each other in a military and political stand off. In the political theory of realism, each state is constantly trying to increase its own power in the anarchy that characterizes international relations. Because states are inherently aggressive and obsessed about their own security, security is a relative gain. One state’s security always comes at the expense of another’s security. In order to feel secure, states build up their power territorially or militarily, but in doing so, they make other states feel more unstable and more likely to build up their own power in turn and making them feel once again insecure. This process, during which security becomes a zero-sum game, is called the security dilemma.

In order to feel more secure, states seek to maintain a high level of deterrence. Deterrence is a complex game which acts upon each actor’s capabilities and motivation to use its military capabilities. Deterrence is in use when a state prevents itself from doing what it intended or desired to do to the other state out of fear for the consequences of its actions. States fear the consequences of their actions

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<sup>345</sup> Reuters, “Israel warns Hizbullah war would invite destruction,” *Ynet News* (3 October 2008), <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3604893,00.html>.

because the price they may pay could affect domestic support for the regime, for instance, or wipe out the country's industry. In conventional deterrence states have "an address," meaning each actors knows exactly who the enemy is and where its center of weakness is. Thomas Schelling writes, "the power to hurt is bargaining power." He also remarks, "unhappily, the power to hurt is often communicated by some performance of it."<sup>346</sup> Schelling does distinguish between coercion, or the power to hurt, and brute force. "Brute force succeeds when it is used, whereas the power to hurt is most successful when held in reserve," he writes, because it is the threat of force that can make someone yield or comply.<sup>347</sup> The strategy of deterrence revolves around the delicate manipulation of the power to hurt.

In asymmetrical warfare, which pits a conventional actor such as a state against a non-state actor such as a terrorist organization, deterrence theory must be rethought, for the non-state actor does not have the same responsibilities and considerations that a non-state actor has, and thus the equation is flawed. It is argued that terrorist organizations lack assets that can be threatened in order to achieve deterrence. For deterrence to work, the deterred has to value something that it does not want to lose (its population, economy, military infrastructure and weapons etc). Deterrence also assumes a debatable point that terrorists groups are rational and make cost-benefit calculation. In his book *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers*, Boaz Ganor explains that such organizations are quite rational; they simply attribute different weight to certain intangible values

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<sup>346</sup> Thomas C. Shelling, "The Diplomacy of Violence," in ed. Robert Art and Kenneth Waltz, *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of American, 1988), 4; 5.

<sup>347</sup> Schelling, 5.

than state actors do in their cost-benefit calculations, such as respect, prestige, or the legitimacy of carrying out God's will. Furthermore, non-state actors do not always have "an address" where their adversaries can target them. "The state contending with terrorism, therefore, is faced with a difficult task- becoming familiar with the terrorist organizations, their ideology, their heritage, culture, motives, and objectives, their decision-making processes and their cost-benefit consideration in such a way that will enable that nation to assess and project in advance the outcomes of the organizations' cost-benefit considerations, and plan its counter-terrorism strategy on the basis of these assessments."<sup>348</sup>

That terrorism is "the weapon of the weak" or "the politics of the shortcut" is perhaps overused and simplified but correct.<sup>349</sup> Perceiving they have no other alternative, organizations use terrorism for variety of reasons. Across the board, though, terrorism is intended to provoke a counterreaction from the stronger actor- in this case, the state- so as to increase publicity for the terrorists' cause and to demonstrate that their charges against the state are well-founded.<sup>350</sup> As the state responds to terrorism with greater force, violence escalates.<sup>351</sup>

"Terrorism is liberal democracy's nemesis, beleaguering it and deforming it even when terrorism goes down to defeat. In all these respects, it is the response to terrorism, rather than terrorism itself, that does democracy most harm."<sup>352</sup> The purpose of terrorism is to provoke the state into an escalation of violence and an

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<sup>348</sup> Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 76.

<sup>349</sup> Ignatieff, 69.

<sup>350</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, No. 4 (July 1981), 387.

<sup>351</sup> Crenshaw, 394.

<sup>352</sup> Ignatieff, 61,

abandonment of the rules (moral, humanitarian, or of warfare). At this point, terrorists can dictate the terms of the encounter. Since terrorist organizations cannot physically destroy a conventional army, they must make the army defeat itself. Weaker adversaries succeed in doing this by adopting the “designing around” approach, in which the enemy recognizes his limits in front of the militarily superior opponent and so adjust his tactics to play to his strengths.<sup>353</sup>

The PLO and Hezbollah did exactly this in the 1982 and 2006 Lebanon Wars. The 1982 War was supposed to change the political order in Lebanon and rid it and Israel of the PLO. But while it eliminated the Palestinian threat for Israel, it provided the space for a more organized, more ideologically committed, and better-financed anti-Israel group- Hezbollah. Furthermore, it fueled anti-Israel antagonism within the Shi'i community which suffered the brunt of the Israeli attacks and which was the base of the rising Hezbollah organization. The war that Israel unleashed against Hezbollah meant to “turn Lebanon back 20 years” caused enormous damage to the civilian population in terms of human life and civilian infrastructure. The goal of the war was to restore Israeli deterrence- no one dares attack Israel and get away with it. But the war accomplished few of its objectives, and those that it did (such as the stationing of Lebanese and international troops at the Israeli border) will not guarantee its security just like they have not in the past. Furthermore, such “get-tough” measures against terrorism have unintended consequences.<sup>354</sup> The tradition in the Israeli military doctrine and history of reliance on force to restore deterrence

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<sup>353</sup> Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 399.

<sup>354</sup> Martha Crenshaw, in Jon Alterman, ed. “How Terrorism Ends,” *Special Report* United States Institute of Peace (25 May, 1999), 3.

has led the IDF to believe that military force is enough to affect its enemies' cost-benefit analysis and restore deterrence vis-à-vis them. After all, "War is [...] the continuation of politics by different means," Clausewitz famously said. This thinking has been conducive to the excessive use of force in situations and against targets that will not necessarily respond according to the conventional theory.

This paper has demonstrated that disproportionate retaliation only postpones Israel's security threats, but does not resolve them for it does not affect the enemy's motivation or capabilities in the long-term. Instead, it has had a counter-productive effect, failing to prevent the organization from rearming, and boosting Hezbollah's motivation in its struggle against Israel. Inflicting a deadly blow on the Lebanese civilian population cause the roles of aggressor and the victim to be reversed: while Israel was initially considered the victim of terrorism and Hezbollah the provocateur, its use of disproportionate retaliation have transformed it into the aggressor. Time will tell whether the Israeli deterrence through disproportionate retaliation will succeed or not, of course. There is no easy solution to Israel's security threats from Hezbollah and other non-state actors beyond its borders. It appears that all solutions before Israeli military leaders are bad ones. A method that can checkmate security threats, that will reap benefits in the long run as in the short run, must be found .

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