

# Strategic ASSESSMENT

Volume 9, No. 2 • August 2006

The Second War in Lebanon

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

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

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## Editors' Note

This issue of *Strategic Assessment* goes to press on the eve of implementation of the UN-brokered ceasefire in Lebanon. The Security Council resolution, formulated over the latter weeks of the fighting, aims at a mediated agreement that offers the Lebanese government the possibility of establishing its sovereignty in south Lebanon.

As the pressure for a diplomatic solution mounted and in the days leading to the final draft of the resolution, the war on Israel's northern border raged on. Reports from the battlefield continued to dominate the headlines, the rocket fire escalated, and there were increasing casualties on both sides. Not only did the many challenges and dilemmas raised by the war not abate; they became more complex with each passing week.

In this issue of short essays, all on the conflict in Lebanon, thirteen JCSS researchers comment on developments in the war, each in his/her domain of expertise. The collective attempt is to clarify the strategic and political situation that emerged during the weeks of fighting.

Many of the articles review a range of issues that are fixed on Israel's national security agenda, but in light of the events on the northern border, became more pressing than ever. These include: the objectives of war, what constitutes a just war, airpower and decisive victory, consensus and public opinion, national resilience, decision-making during a crisis, the contribution of multi-national forces, the limits of deterrence, and the need to develop intercepting weaponry. Other articles deal with key questions for the Middle East's immediate present and its more distant future, such as: Iran in search of hegemony; Syria as a bench player; Lebanon – fragile, divided, and at risk for another civil war; Islamic fundamentalism on the rise; underdeveloped countries as a breeding ground for international terror; and the Arab world torn between moderates and extremists.

The articles in this issue fall into three sections. The first group examines aspects related to Israel; the second reviews the standpoint of national, regional, and international actors; and the third comprises four articles that are more analytical and conceptual in nature. The concluding article, written by Dr. Zvi Shtauber, Head of JCSS, presents some of the conclusions drawn from the current situation and delineates some possible developments in the region in the foreseeable future.

It is our hope that calmer times will allow the next issue to return to its regular format.

# Israeli Government Policy and the War's Objectives

Yehuda Ben Meir

## The War's Opening

The 2006 war in Lebanon caught Israel's government by surprise. This is a new government, not only technically, since by law a new government is formed after a general election. Rather, this is a new administration in the most fundamental sense, and the triumvirate leading the government in the areas of foreign affairs and defense are new to their positions. The prime minister, a civilian lacking military background, has indeed served in several governments and even served as deputy prime minister for the past three years, but thus far has not taken part in directing defense activities. The minister of defense is a politician with absolutely no experience in either defense or foreign affairs, and who has never served as a minister or even as a member of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. The minister of foreign affairs is also relatively new to her position, and has not been previously involved in diplomacy in any significant way.

Some believe that Hizbollah's intent in abducting the soldiers, which occurred shortly after the

Hamas operation at Kerem Shalom, was to challenge the new government and to test the mettle of its leaders, in the best Soviet tradition whereby Moscow would test each new American president. True or not, there is no doubt that Hizbollah's action on the morning of July 12, little over a fortnight after the abduction of the soldier at Kerem Shalom, has posed a serious challenge for the new government and its leading triumvirate.

To the surprise of many, including apparently Hassan Nasrallah, the government's actions were swift and decisive. On the morning of the abduction the prime minister convened a special government meeting for that evening, which indicates that even in those early hours he was determined to embark on a widespread military action against Hizbollah. Indeed, that

very same evening the government unanimously approved the proposal made by the prime minister and the minister of defense to launch a frontal assault on Hizbollah throughout Lebanon. The significance of this decision lies in that the government was well aware of the implications therein, namely, on the one hand, severe damage to civilian infrastructures throughout Lebanon and the consequent international repercussions, and on the other hand, exposing the entire northern part of the country, to Haifa and beyond, to an ongoing onslaught of thousands of Katyusha rockets and missiles, with the related domestic implications. In this sense one might say that merely by making the decision and implementing it over an extended period of time, one of the objectives of this war has been achieved: renewing

Israel's power of deterrence.

## Objectives of the War

The objectives of the war are not easy to define. The politicians, as is their wont, have defined three general objectives for the war: shattering Hizbollah, restoring Israel's





deterrence, and changing the reality in Lebanon. These objectives are phrased in a very general and unfocused manner, and with the exception of reinstating Israel's deterrence – which has already been achieved to a large degree – it is unclear whether the two remaining objectives are attainable. There are, however, several specific objectives whose achievement, or lack thereof, will determine the success of this operation. These objectives are:

- Return of the two abducted soldiers without linkage to the release of Palestinian prisoners

- Reduction if not neutralization of Hizbollah's military power, by destroying the majority of its weapons, especially its rockets, and eliminating as large a number as possible of its fighters, primarily its senior leadership

- Weakening of Hizbollah's status in Lebanon and in the Arab world, by undermining its military force, symbols, and image

- Removal of Hizbollah from Israel's border, deployment of the Lebanese army in the south, and exercise of Lebanon's sovereignty and

its elected government's rule over southern Lebanon

- Establishment of a mechanism to disarm Hizbollah of its heavy rocket weaponry and prevent further

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**By making the decision to embark on a widespread military action against Hizbollah and implement it over an extended period of time, one of the objectives of this war has been achieved: renewing Israel's power of deterrence.**

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weaponry supply from Iran and Syria to Hizbollah.

Some of these objectives, such as damaging Hizbollah's military power, weakening its status, and distancing it from Israel's border, are attainable, in whole or in part, by military means. The remaining objectives are attainable, in whole or in part, only by a diplomatic accord with international backing. It seems that the Israeli government is well aware of this, and is acting towards this goal. The prime minister, the minister of defense, and the minister of foreign affairs have made it clear that Israel will pursue

the military and diplomatic channels concurrently. Diplomatic activity switched into high gear with the visit to the region by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Presumably any diplomatic accord will be grounded in a new resolution of the UN Security Council that essentially reaffirms resolution 1559 and creates a multinational force to deploy in southern Lebanon and assist in deployment of the Lebanese army all the way to the Israeli border.

At this stage the end result of the military campaign is difficult to anticipate. There is no doubt that Hizbollah has been hit hard and hence

weakened, but it is too soon to speak of a decisive military victory. The final picture depends on many factors, some of which remain undefined. Unexpected developments are possible as well, which may significantly influence the perception of the final outcome. These include, on the one hand, a surprise by Hizbollah or, on the other hand, Israeli success in eliminating Nasrallah or other senior Hizbollah leaders. Nevertheless, in the total balance sheet for this campaign, significant weight should be assigned to Israeli national resilience. The Israeli home front has endured weeks of attacks unprecedented in

scope and depth since the Independence War. Still, polls weeks into the war showed that 90 percent of the public supported the war, 85 percent viewed the IDF's performance as positive, and 70 percent regarded the performance by the prime minister and the minister of defense as good or very good. As is customary in a democracy, the opposition too has supported the government and provided it with full backing. These expressions are a significant contribution to Israel's power of deterrence.

As for the diplomatic accord, the chances of realizing it are also difficult to anticipate. Any diplomatic agreement must be grounded in a Security Council resolution, and hence must be agreed upon by its five permanent members, accepted by moderate Arab countries, and consented to by the Lebanese government and of course by Israel. In this equation the Lebanese government is the weakest link and its final position is difficult to anticipate, even more so since there are two governments in

effect, that of Prime Minister Siniora and that of President Lahoud.

### **Strategic Decisions by the Government**

In conclusion, two strategic decisions made by the government at the outset of the operation should be reviewed. The first was not to involve Syria, and to limit military action against Hizbollah to Lebanese territory only. The second was to focus on aerial assaults and to avoid, as much as possible, ground troop operations in southern Lebanon.

Both decisions are controversial, and some question their wisdom. As for the first decision, vehemently upheld by the government, some believe that the only way to deal a deadly blow to Hizbollah is by removing Syria's sponsorship of the organization, and that this cannot be achieved without a military strike against Syria. In the opposite corner, those backing the government's decision claim that Hizbollah's isolation

and the mere fact that no entity in the Arab or Muslim world has come to its rescue are important contributions to its weakening.

As for the second decision, the government itself did not embrace it for very long. Even by the end of the first week of fighting it became clear that the air force alone could not significantly curtail the rocket attacks on Israel's home front, and that deploying ground troops to southern Lebanon was inevitable. Quite a few critical voices were raised against the government for not instructing the IDF, even at the outset of the operation, to overtake Hizbollah strongholds next to the border and to physically destroy the rocket launching infrastructure in these strongholds and villages.

The IDF thus expanded the scope of its ground forces action in southern Lebanon, with multiple signs, including an extensive call up of reserves, that the war will see more widespread ground troop action in southern Lebanon.

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# Israel's Home Front: A Key Factor in the Confrontation with Hizbollah

**Meir Elran**

Several weeks into the second Lebanon War, it is increasingly apparent that the civilian home front is once again a central element in the military confrontation. With thousands of rockets launched at northern towns, at the rate of over one hundred a day, Hizbollah's strategy in the current confrontation has emerged as an integrated war of attrition. It is based primarily on strong defense both deep inside Lebanon and in its south, coupled with a continuous attack on the north of Israel. Its aim is to hit the very fabric of civilian life in Israel, mostly through the use of scare tactics and the disruption of the daily routine. Hizbollah's leadership is thus materializing the concept it cultivated in recent years, based on the assumption that the home front is the weakest, most vulnerable link in Israel. Hence, undermining it might tip the balance, despite Israel's superior military power.

**I**n the weeks of fighting Hizbollah has succeeded in manifesting its war doctrine, reaping the fruits of lengthy, meticulous preparation of its long-range weapons arsenal and realizing its ability to keep firing almost continuously even under difficult conditions created by Israel's total air superiority. The large number of rockets fired at Israel's towns reflects the essence of the current engagement: this is a military confrontation where the home front plays a key role. One cannot ignore the symmetry between Israeli and Lebanese civilians caught in continuous attacks of long-range weaponry. And in both cases, the civilian population is perceived as targets that are supposed to translate their grievances into politi-

cal pressure on their respective leaderships in order to change the political agendas.

The situation emerging on Israel's home front is fairly complex. On the one hand, normal life for much of Israel's populace in the north is all but gone. There are numerous casualties as well as extensive damage to property, and the evident economic damage, primarily in the north, has started to have an impact on the national scene a whole. According to various reports, the number of Israelis who have left their homes ranges between one third to one half the population for some northern towns, and for other towns, mostly along the border, almost everyone has been evacuated. In many cases those who remained

at home belong to the weaker sectors – elderly people and others whose socio-economic status does not enable them to seek long-term lodging in the center of Israel. Under such circumstances there is a clear and problematic dividing line between the northern periphery, threatened and stricken, and the center, which continues its everyday routine.

Nevertheless, the general impression is that the Israeli public, including in the north, has so far exhibited a fair amount of strength, resilience, consensus, and clear political support for the government and the war's objectives. A poll conducted by the IDF's Home Front Command, published in the IDF magazine *Bamahane* on July 19, showed that 80 percent

of residents of the north thought the IDF should continue military operations in Lebanon. A poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute, directed by Dr. Mina Tzemach, and published in the *Yediot Ahronot* daily on July 18 reported that 86 percent felt the IDF's operation is justified, 87 percent were satisfied with the IDF's performance in the war, and 78 percent were satisfied with the prime minister's performance. In the Home Front Command poll 74 percent of the northern residents polled indicated they preferred remaining at home, and 65 percent defined their personal fortitude as "very high." A poll conducted by Rafi Smith and published in the daily financial newspaper *Globes* on July 19 reported that 85 percent of those polled, all from the north, believed that the public was exhibiting a high degree of resilience. After about two weeks into the war a clear erosion in the degree of solidarity was evident, even if it remained fairly substantial. Into the third week there were indications of stability in the rate of support of the government and the IDF, which suggests that the public was still showing clear signs of resilience facing the continuous attack of the Hizbollah rockets into civilian populated centers.

It is too early to draw systematic conclusions on the fortitude exhibited by the public, and especially its long term resilience. Obviously there is a concerted effort by the municipal and national leaderships to portray public opinion in a positive way. At this stage most of the media – and the

electronic media in particular – presents a similar picture of solid endurance, staunch support of the government and especially the IDF, and overall mutual concern.

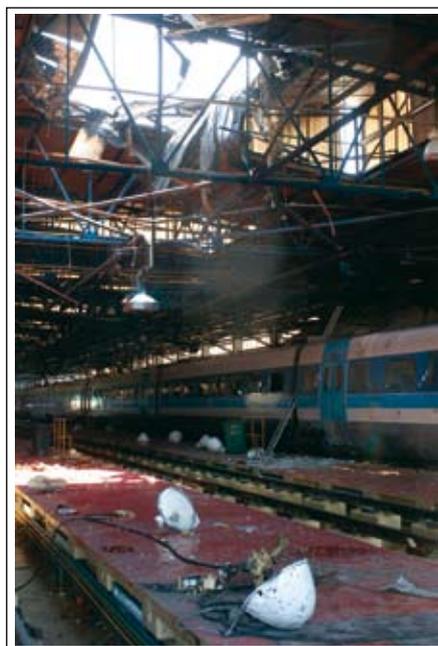
Several reasons might be suggested for the public's resilience in the present confrontation:

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### **IDF combat on a defined front against a specific enemy encourages patriotic sentiments and promotes the public's natural tendency to join in what is currently termed "embracing the soldiers."**

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■ The most important factor is the collective belief this is a just struggle against a ruthless enemy. This is based on the fact that Israel withdrew unilaterally and completely from Lebanon in 2000 and that Hizbollah started this round with a deliberate provocation. Hizbollah is commonly



portrayed and perceived as the clear representative of the evil triangle of Islamism, fundamentalism, and terrorism. A poll dated July 24, conducted on the *start* web site, reflected the public's firm attitude: 73 percent supported wide-ranging ground troop operations in southern Lebanon; 13

percent supported restricted ground troop operations, and 14 percent supported restricting Israeli military action to the air. According to a poll of 500 adults published in the *Maariv* daily on August 5, 80 percent of respondents supported the military's conduct and 74 percent agreed that Prime Minister Olmert and his government were doing their job.

■ IDF combat on a defined front against a specific enemy encourages patriotic sentiments and promotes the public's natural tendency to join in what is currently termed "embracing the soldiers." This well-known trait of the Israeli public is enhanced by the government's determined position, which manifests itself by the activation of significant military force.

■ As long as the number of casualties is not unbearably high, the Israeli public can keep up its sense of solidarity. Once there are more casual-

ties, and particularly among soldiers, the picture starts to be more complicated, opening the way for more doubts and criticism.

■ The feeling is that this time, leaving homes under attack in northern towns is understandable and legitimate. Unlike in past cases, those leaving are not regarded as “deserters,” but rather as people pursuing a rational choice. In a poll conducted on the *msn* web site with over 1,600 respondents, 90.5 percent said that

It could be argued that the sentiment of national resilience is subjective to a large extent and may even be misleading, if not manipulative. It may change relatively quickly as the circumstances change, yielding to distress, disappointment, and dissatisfaction, which would be followed by criticism and opposition. This is where the military campaign meets the domestic front. Visible successes in the military campaign, particularly if casualties do not mount signifi-

ground for long-term tranquility on the northern border. Mere words of support and enthusiasm for the fortitude of the home front will not suffice for very long. The government can and should focus its efforts on confronting the hardships of northern towns on a system-wide basis. To a large extent, this requires two parallel national efforts: a military one, led by the IDF, and a civilian one, led by state agencies that will be in charge of running the domestic campaign to empower the home front.

This effort should call for several key elements: an immediate improvement of the civil defense system, including in the Arab sector; reinforcement of the socio-psychological support system in the towns under attack; rapid implementation of economic programs for those damaged on various levels, including statutory arrangements for retributions for those who suffered severe financial losses, as well as strengthening the municipal systems that directly serve the individuals. Past cases have proven that there is a direct link between systemic support for the individual and public resilience. This link appears to be vital for success in the current confrontation as well. National resilience may be an abstract term, but nonetheless it must be strengthened with clear and tangible investments.

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### **There is a direct link between systemic support for the individual and public resilience. National resilience may be an abstract term, but nonetheless it must be strengthened with clear and tangible investments.**

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the decision of those who left their homes in the north under Hizbollah fire was understandable. This attitude was echoed by Knesset Member Prof. Shlomo Breznitz, an expert on stress situations, in saying (*Haaretz*, July 20) that “one should be very careful in saying that people should not be evacuated...If someone lives in an area that is being threatened and can, with little effort, move somewhere further away, this is one of the most rational behaviors. There should be no social sanction attached to it...On the contrary, this should be encouraged.”

cantly, will impact on the domestic resilience. A lack of such success may effect an opposite impact.

The Israeli leadership is well aware of this conundrum. Hence the need for clear and visible successes on the battlefield. But the clock is already ticking in the domestic arena where one hears some expressions of doubts as well as public criticism and arguments, primarily in the printed media.

The Israeli government can do more to strengthen its civilian home front. Obviously the basis for this has to be military achievements to set the

# Artillery Rockets: Should Means of Interception be Developed?

Yiftah Shapir

The use of artillery rockets against civilian targets in Israel is the most prominent feature of the current war. Hizbollah has fired thousands of rockets at northern Israeli towns. Hamas uses a similar though much more primitive weapon, which it launches from the Gaza Strip into nearby towns. This article examines the characteristics of artillery rockets, the way they are operated, the implications stemming from their use, and the chances of developing a means to intercept them.

## Pluses and Minuses of Artillery Rockets

Artillery rockets are used by regular armies for special needs only. In no army do they constitute the backbone of artillery fire support. Armies continue to rely on towed or self-propelled artillery, as they did half a century ago. There are several reasons, however, why Hizbollah nonetheless prefers to use artillery rockets.

First, rocket launchers are very simple to produce and operate. A rocket is fired from a thin barrel or a rail, which is not heavy or rifled like a cannon barrel. Unlike an artillery shell, there is no recoil, and therefore it does not require the complex recoil absorption mechanism of cannons. Many launching barrels can be mounted on a light truck, and a single launching barrel can be carried on the back of an animal or even a soldier. Second, artillery rockets provide coverage of longer ranges than standard artillery: unguided rockets are usually effective up to about 100 km, and

some boast even longer ranges. For example, the Russian Smerch has a range of 70 km and the Chinese WS-1B is advertised as having a range of 180 km. Third, artillery rockets are used for quick and dense coverage: the Russian BM21 launcher, for example, is capable of firing 40 122-mm rockets in less than a minute. A battalion of twelve launchers can, therefore, fire 480 rockets on one target in less than a minute. Fourth, artillery rockets are used for special needs. For example, very heavy rockets with short firing ranges (1-4 km) are used for clearing mine fields.

At the same time, artillery rockets have some serious disadvantages, besides being of lower accuracy than artillery shells. Special expertise is required for the manufacture of rockets that have a reasonable degree of accuracy. For longer range rockets, the manufacturing process is highly complex. In addition, and this is probably the greatest disadvantage, rocket firing generates a great deal of fire and

smoke, which immediately exposes the launchers to the enemy. Therefore, launcher operators must withdraw from their firing positions as soon as they finish shooting. In the case of guerilla forces operating a single barrel, several launchers can be placed in the field, aimed at the target, and operated by remote control or by a delayed-action fuse, thereby preventing the operators from being exposed to counter-fire. In this manner, the attacking force can move quickly, hide, shoot, and flee to other hiding places. This is an advantage that does not exist in the case of regular artillery batteries, whose movement is more difficult to hide.

## Is it Worthwhile to Develop Means of Interception?

Since artillery rockets are less than accurate (a reasonable degree of accuracy is a dispersion of about 1-1.5% of the range), they can be operated against point targets at short ranges only. At longer ranges, they are

## Rocket Weaponry in the Battle Zone - Main Characteristics

Rocket Name	Caliber	Length	Weight	Warhead Weight	Range Minimum – Maximum	Warhead Type	Remarks
<b>Chinese Rockets</b>					12-barrel launcher, towed, or on a jeep, or a single launcher, portable		
Type 63 (Fadjr-1)	107 mm	0.84 – 0.92 m	18.8 kg	Approx. 5 kg (estimated)	8,500 m	Explosive, fragmentation	Chinese rocket
<b>Grad Type</b>					BM-21 40-barrel launcher, as well as 12, 36 barrels, and also portable single barrels		
9M22U	122 mm	3.226 m	66.2 kg	19.4 kg	1,500 m – 20,389 m	Fragmentation, smoke, ignition	This is the basic, original rocket
9M22M	122 mm	2.870 m	66.0 kg	18.4 kg	1,500 m – 20,000 m		
9M2B	122 mm	1.905 m	45.8 kg	19.4 kg	2,500 m – 10,800 m		Used by special forces
9M217	122 mm		70 kg	25 kg	30,000 m		New models
9M218	122 mm		70 kg	25 kg	40,000 m		
9M521	122 mm		70 kg	21 kg	37,500 m		
<b>Uragan BM 9P140</b>					Launcher - ZIL 135 truck, portable, 16 barrels		
9M27F	220 mm	4.8 – 5.1 m depending on the type	280 kg	100 kg	10,000 – 35,000 m	Explosive, fragmentation, various cluster munitions	There is a range of rocket types
<b>Various Iranian Launchers</b>							
Fadjr-3	240 mm	5.2 m	407 kg	90 kg	17,000 – 43,000 m		12 barrels, on truck
Fadjr-5	333 mm	6.485 m	915 kg	175 kg	75,000 m		4 barrels, on truck
Falaq-1	240 mm		111 kg	50 kg	10,000 m		4 barrels, on jeep
Falaq-2	333 mm		255 kg	120 kg	10,800 m		1 barrel, on jeep
Zelzal-2	610 mm	8.46 m	3,400 kg	600 kg	210,000 m		Track on jeep
<b>Possible weaponry in the arena</b>							
WS-1	302 mm	4.737 m	524 kg	150 kg	40,000 – 100,000 m		Chinese-made, maybe sold to Iran
WS-1B	302 mm	6.375 m	725 kg	150 kg	60,000 – 180,000 m		Chinese-made
BM 9A52 Smerch	300 mm	7.6 m	800 kg	120-130 kg	20,000 – 70,000 m (there is also 90,000 m)	Explosive, fuel-air, various cluster munitions	12-barrel launcher

aimed at targets like neighborhoods or towns. Thus, their main function in the current war is to serve as a weapon of terror against population centers.

Although Hizbollah leader Nasrallah attempted in one of his statements to claim that he was deliberately refraining from firing rockets at the chemical plants in the Haifa bay in order to prevent large-scale contamination, it is clear that Hizbollah is mainly shooting at population centers. In the south too, Hamas is firing Qassam rockets at population centers for similar reasons. This use is what has turned artillery rockets into a grave strategic threat that no government can ignore.

In recent years, consideration has been given to the possibility of intercepting rockets, mainly as a byproduct of the idea of intercepting ballistic missiles, like Israel's Arrow System and the anti-ballistic missile defense systems currently being developed in the US.

However, intercepting artillery rocket is an exceedingly complicated matter. First, the flight duration of the rockets is relatively short – about a minute or two, for ranges of 20-40 km. Second, their signature is low. In terms of a radar cross-section, they constitute extremely small targets. True, the propellant has a significant signature while burning, but it operates for a few seconds only, and for most of their flight time, the rockets fly in a ballistic trajectory, without propulsion. Third, they are usually launched in large salvos. A successful

interception would be one that hits a very high percentage of the salvo, but the attacker will always be able to saturate the defender's defense system with more rockets.

In addition, a careful financial analysis shows that the rockets do not cause a great deal of damage. Their large dispersal around targets on the one hand, and the dispersal of the elements that are likely to be hit in the target area on the other, causes



most of the rockets to land in open areas without causing any damage, and only a small fraction of them succeed in causing death and injuries. This fact has been demonstrated throughout the current war in the north. However, a cold calculation is of no value when a country's leadership faces a situation in which its citizens are hit in their homes by enemy weapons.

We must make such a calculation when we consider the cost of developing an anti-rocket system, and use it to derive the cost of intercepting a single rocket. It is precisely such calculations that have negated the idea of developing a system for intercepting artillery shells, for example. No one thought it worthwhile to invest

hundreds of millions of dollars in developing such a system. However, when the rockets land on cities and political pressure is exerted on the country's leadership, this consideration takes on a different nature. The cold calculation of the average damage from a single rocket disappears when the population is hit. From the political leaders' point of view, the very existence of a technological option to intercept rockets, weak as it may be, is a weighty factor, since they feel they cannot withstand the claim voiced against them: "You could have done something and you didn't."

Thus, once again rocket fire is affecting weighty and costly political and military decisions since it was precisely these considerations that led Israel to begin developing a system like the Nautilus – a chemical laser system whose declared objective was to intercept the Grad rockets that were fired on Israel's northern towns during the late 1980s and the 1990s. The Nautilus system was not developed beyond a very heavy experimental system, and the development of its lighter, mobile version was discontinued due to financial considerations.

It seems that the fighting in the north has increased the chances that money will be invested in developing this system or another that is intended to achieve the same purpose. The purely technical consideration does not justify such investments, but when other considerations are taken into account, mainly the political one, such investments are legitimate.

# The Ayatollah, Hizbollah, and Hassan Nasrallah

Ephraim Kam

There is no doubt about Iran's deep involvement in Hizbollah activity. Iran founded the organization, constitutes its main source of inspiration, and sees it as the best success story of exporting the Islamic Revolution. Supplementing its strong ties with Syria, Hizbollah is attached to Iran at the hip. Iran supplies the organization with most of its weaponry, including the majority of its rocket arsenal, and offers financial support totaling tens of millions of dollars every year. Iran trains Hizbollah fighters at camps in both Iran and Lebanon, and since 1982 has maintained a Lebanon-based unit of the Revolutionary Guards, whose members also serve as military advisers to the organization. The Hizbollah leadership maintains regular, direct contact with the heads of the Iranian regime, consults with them on fundamental and ongoing matters, and coordinates its moves with them. Without Iranian military support, Hizbollah would not have dared to provoke Israel. Iran is building Hizbollah's military strength not only to bolster it vis-à-vis Israel and the Lebanese arena, but also to use the organization's military capabilities – primarily the rocket arsenal – in order to strike at Israel for its own reasons, if it sees the need to do so.

Nonetheless, there is no need to regard the kidnapping of two IDF soldiers, which led to the current deterioration in Lebanon, as an outgrowth of an Iranian initiative to ease international pressure regarding its nuclear weapons program. Despite its affinity with Iran, Hizbollah is not an Iranian puppet, and the two have not always seen eye to eye over political and operational issues. Hizbollah has its own considerations, which are not only related to its status as an important factor in the Lebanese arena, but also subject to Syrian influence. Therefore, one may assume that the move was, first and foremost, the result of a decision taken by the Hizbollah leadership.

Hassan Nasrallah had good reasons of his own to kidnap the soldiers. He had announced his intention months in advance, and had tried to do so in the past. From his perspective the timing was right for a move of this sort, with the IDF engaged in a major operation in the Gaza Strip and the north at the height of its tourist season. On the other hand, it is difficult to see what great gain Iran would derive from the operation: since the apparent expectation was that Israel's reaction would be limited, as in the past, the ben-

efit in postponing the preoccupation with the Iranian nuclear issue could also be expected to be limited. Therefore, one may assume that in the current situation, Hizbollah coordinated the kidnapping with Iran at least in a general manner and that Iran gave the organization its blessing, but did not dictate its moves.

Meanwhile, Iran is showing signs of concern about the complications and prolongation of the crisis, and its anxiety is well-founded. How the IDF operation will affect Iran largely depends on the results of the campaign and the arrangement that is reached. However, it is already possible to predict that if Israel achieves at least some of its operational objectives in Lebanon, Iran is likely to suffer damage in several ways. By its very response, Israel has enhanced its deterrent capabilities vis-à-vis Hizbollah: Israel has demonstrated that it is no longer possible to rely on its reluctance to engage in a second front, i.e., in Lebanon, or on its fear that the organization will unleash the rocket arsenal that Iran built for it. So far, the large-scale rocket attacks have hurt the northern residents, but have not weakened the resilience of Israeli society. A substantial part of the rocket arsenal has been eroded, due to both

the IDF operation and the use of the weapons. Hizbollah is being pushed back from the border, and may not be able to return to it.

All these constitute, first and foremost, damage to Hizbollah, but also to Iran. Iran regards Hizbollah's strength, especially its rocket arsenal and deployment on the border, as an important component in its deterrent capabilities vis-à-vis Israel. Until now, for example, Israel has refrained from punishing Iran for its increasing involvement in Palestinian and Lebanese terrorism, partially out of fear that Iran would respond by unleashing Hizbollah's rockets on northern Israel. This deterrent factor will not disappear, but if Israel succeeds in sustaining its operational achievements, Iran's deterrence toward it will erode because Hizbollah's threat to Israel will decrease. The IDF operation has also proven that there is a limit to Iran's ability to assist its protégé in time of need: Israel is causing Hizbollah significant damage, and Iran has no choice but to stand on the sidelines and offer verbal support while attempting to continue arms shipments. It is no coincidence that the Iranian regime is threatening to respond severely to Israel if it at-

tacks Syria, but it is not making any explicit threats in response to Israel's pounding of Hizbollah. It is possible, then, that in the future, Nasrallah will think twice about how much support he can expect from Iran in times of difficulty.

So far, the only gain Iran can point to from the present crisis is that attention has temporarily been diverted from the Iranian nuclear issue. On the other hand, it may emerge damaged in other ways. Hizbollah may be weakened in the Lebanese political arena. The international, regional, and internal Lebanese criticism of Hizbollah's conduct may in turn be leveled at Iran. Even more than in the past, Iran may be perceived as an entity that fans the flames in Lebanon, and one that must be curbed as part of a future arrangement so as to prevent a renewed flare-up in the region.

Must Israel seize the current opportunity and attack Iran, too, in order to deter it from rehabilitating Hizbollah and force it to reduce its involvement in Palestinian terrorism? On this matter, one must distinguish between two types of actions. In Lebanon, there are Iranian targets, primarily those related to the Revolutionary Guards and Iranian efforts

to strengthen and arm Hizbollah. These are legitimate targets as part of the fight against Hizbollah, and it is appropriate to strike them insofar as they are known. It is doubtful whether Iran would admit that they were hit because it categorically denies that it provides Hizbollah with military assistance. It is also reasonable to assume that Iran will make a supreme effort to rehabilitate and rearm the organization as much as possible in light of the damage and losses it has incurred, and Israel, aided by international entities, will have to do everything it can in order to disrupt this effort.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to seize the opportunity to hit targets in Iran itself. Israel must now focus on achieving its operational objectives in Lebanon. Attacking some targets in Iran or for that matter attacking targets in Syria will not force either regime to loosen its ties with Hizbollah, and both regimes also have the ability to respond to Israel, for example, by means of missiles with ranges of hundreds of kilometers. At a time when Israel is examining how it can successfully conclude the fighting in Lebanon, it should not open another front in Iran or Syria.

# The Ethnic Conflict in Lebanon and the Future Status of Hizbollah

Aiman Mansour

“Other than the Shiites, there is no one who will say he loves Hizbollah.” This statement was made by a Lebanese Christian woman, who was asked in a TV interview how the average Lebanese relates to Hizbollah. And indeed, this is the essence of Lebanon: the citizens’ ethnic approach to every matter. In Lebanon, there is no ethnic community that is loyal to true democratic principles, and casting the internal confrontation between Hizbollah and the Junblat-Lebanese *forces-al-Mustaqbal* (the future) trend as a confrontation between a fundamentalist force and a democratic-liberal force contradicts the nature of Lebanon. The identity differences and huge conflict of interests among the communities will only worsen as a result of the current Lebanese crisis, which might lead to a violent internal crisis.

In Lebanon, a person identifies not only with his ethnic community, but also with a particular sect within that community. The interests of each sect (particularly the leader’s interests) are determined by its place in the balance of power. In the past, what led sworn enemies to join forces, such as the Lebanese forces and Junblat family supporters, was an interest in weakening the other side, i.e., Hizbollah, which they felt had accumulated too much power. Unlike the other sects, Hizbollah’s identity is a combination of ethnic identity and religious fervor. This combination, which is reflected in the organization’s Khomeinist ideology, moves the other sectors to cooperate against it.

The outbreak of violence between Israel and Hizbollah has sharpened

the internal disputes in Lebanon. Hizbollah and its allies justify the kidnapping of the soldiers as a move that protects Lebanon and its honor within the anti-West Arab-Islamic world, whereas the other part of Lebanon sees Hizbollah’s action as a challenge to the government and the sovereignty of state institutions. The prolongation of the fighting has intensified the verbal violence, and each side has threatened to settle the score with its adversary after the confrontation ends.

Hizbollah is currently waging an uncompromising fight for its very existence, and its main concern is not Israel. Its leaders believe that Israel is incapable of eradicating it, and their conviction stems from their recognition that the organization is based more on the motivation of re-

ligious ideology than on a physical infrastructure that can be destroyed. Hizbollah’s fears relate to the internal arena and the external patrons of the various sects. Therefore, the organization directs much of its propaganda inward and presents itself as Lebanon’s main protective force (the Lebanese flag is seen more and more in al-Manar propaganda films). Those Hizbollah spokespersons who are interviewed tend to answer each question by emphasizing the “national unity” that is necessary at such a sensitive time, and attempt to shy away from dealing with the questions involving the organization’s sovereignty and the legitimacy of its existence as a trans-national organization within a national state. It should also be noted that the organization’s senior members see the behavior of

their opponents as treason, but prefer to postpone the confrontation with them for a more convenient time, when Israel is no longer shelling its strongholds.

The end of the confrontation will not bring quiet to the internal arena. Even a ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Lebanese government will not lead Hizbollah to any soul-searching over the great destruction it will have wreaked on Lebanon and will not cause it to disarm voluntarily. Hizbollah will probably continue to mouth the same line, i.e., the kidnapping was intended to bring about the release of Samir Quntar, Nissim Nassar, and Yihye Skaf (who isn't even in Israeli hands and whose fate is unknown), and the Israeli attack was designed to "break the resistance" and drag Lebanon into the circle of Western influence.

The opposing side, especially Walid Junblat and the leader of the Lebanese forces, Samir Jaja, can be expected to increase its criticism of Hizbollah and its existence as an independent entity within a sovereign state. Junblat has already declared that he opposes any ceasefire that does not lead to the disarming of Hizbollah. Moreover, this camp will continue to criticize Hizbollah as an agent of the Iranians, who support it, see it as the successful manifestation of the Islamic Revolution, and consider its leader, Nasrallah, as "the successor of the burning blood of Khomeini."

However, the Lebanese groups

that want Hizbollah to disarm are in for a difficult struggle, to say the least. Hizbollah's opponents will be accused by the Shiite organization's leaders of acting against the interests of the Arab people in general, and Lebanon in particular. Hizbollah and its supporters in other communities will claim that the opposing camp consists of traitors because of their close ties with the Americans, who are continuing to support Israel. The Hizbollah opponents' claim that they are the majority in Lebanon will be countered with the argument that even if they are the majority in parliament, they are not the majority among the people. This argument is based on the fact that more than 40 percent of Lebanese are Shiites, and the vast majority of them support Hizbollah. Furthermore, besides the Shiites, Hizbollah claims support among local leaders who are not represented in parliament. The argument made by Hizbollah and its supporters will take on greater significance with the anticipated debate over voting procedures in Lebanon. According to the Shiites, the current election method prevents them from having proper representation in parliament given their percentage of the population. Conversely, the Christians constitute about 25 percent of the population but hold 50 percent of the seats in parliament.

The power of those who want Hizbollah to disarm is very limited and will remain so even if they want

to use the Lebanese army (in addition to the multinational force that may be deployed in the area). As an outgrowth of this, and despite the great damage to its power as a result of the IDF action, Hizbollah will continue to place a very difficult obstacle in the way of those who want it to cease to exist as a state within a state. Highly critical rhetoric is, therefore, what will make the headlines in Lebanon following the ceasefire. History shows that harsh rhetoric is a recipe for a head-to-head confrontation in the Middle East. The low sensitivity threshold (as was reflected in the matter involving Nasrallah's appearance on the satirical show on the Christian LBC TV channel, and the street violence it sparked) and the future conflicting interests will produce a pressure-cooker situation that might explode into violence and even another civil war.

It is impossible to foresee how long such a deterioration will last, but Lebanon's multiethnic structure and the conflicting views held by the various camps leave little chance for internal peacemaking, despite the involvement of the international community. Therefore, one must relate seriously to the possibility that the disarming of Hizbollah, even if it is done by force, will not go quickly and smoothly. Such a process, which entails difficult political and military efforts, also bears the seed of internal bloodletting that will likely spill over into Israel as well.

# Hizbollah and the Morning After: Guerilla, Terror, and Psychological Warfare

Yoram Schweitzer

Any assessment of Hizbollah after the hostilities largely depends on the results of the war it is waging against Israel (or how they are portrayed), and these are still unknown. Despite this limitation, one can nevertheless point to some key objectives that Hizbollah's leaders would like to achieve, at least in the short term. Although the political arena is the milieu that will command the most attention vis-à-vis the results of the fighting between Israel and Hizbollah, this article will attempt primarily to assess Hizbollah's anticipated actions in the military-terrorist and cognitive-propaganda spheres. It is safe to predict that Hizbollah will want to achieve these goals regardless of the "objective" results of the fighting, playing down the death and destruction caused by its July 12 attack on Israel. Nasrallah, in true form, is expected to try and use his rhetorical talents to turn the pain of the blows suffered by his organization and Lebanon into an impressive, unprecedented military and fundamental achievement against the Israeli army.

**D**espite the tactical achievement it gained by kidnapping the Israeli soldiers, Hizbollah has scored a strategic failure by underestimating the intensity, depth, and timing of Israel's response. As an interim assessment of the Israeli attack, it is already clear that the or-

ganization has paid a heavy price in terms of loss of life among its fighters, the destruction of its military and civilian infrastructure in southern Lebanon, the destruction of its headquarters, and a severe blow to its centers in Beirut and Baalbek and to its supporters' civilian infrastructure. Even the public image of Nasrallah, the charismatic leader who was esteemed – at times excessively – for his abilities, has been tarnished, or at

Hizbollah is a multifaceted organization with religious, social, political, and military institutions, and all of them together constitute its source of strength and uniqueness. Nonetheless, the organization's military-terrorist component is that which has earned it most of its publicity and has contributed greatly to the consolidation of its current stature in Lebanon. On this level, the organization operates through two branches: one deals with conventional, semi-military combat and guerilla fighting, and the other focuses on activating and directing terror activities.

In the "conventional" military and guerilla sphere, one can expect that the organization will do its utmost

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**Hizbollah will continue to nurture and exploit with even greater intensity its ties with terror organizations, Palestinian terror networks, and lone Arab-Israeli cells.**

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least weakened. His personality and status following the war will have a great impact on the organization's future conduct.

to minimize the war damage. Even if forced to forego its outposts in southern Lebanon, it will try to maneuver in order to preserve its status as an independent military force and will certainly try to obstruct every attempt regarding its immediate disarmament. If it manages to preserve its unique status as the only armed militia in Lebanon, it will strive to re-equip itself, via Iran and Syria, with strategic weapons such as medium and long-range missiles and other military capabilities, or at the very

works, and lone Arab-Israeli cells in order to hurt Israel and preserve for itself and its Iranian patrons the ability both to influence and to thwart political moves in the future.

Hizbollah also has the option of conducting terror activities abroad against Israeli and other targets via a mechanism that specializes in such acts and whose infrastructure is deployed in various countries. The organization has not committed attacks abroad in recent years, especially because of a joint decision by Hizbollah

port of both Hizbollah and Iran.

A principal area in which Hizbollah (especially its leader, Nasrallah) specializes is that of psychological warfare. This component is a force multiplier in the organization's strategic arsenal, and Hizbollah makes wise use of it in order to reinforce its power image and present its limitations and failures as achievements. Nasrallah's polished and carefully timed appearances on the various TV channels, both Arabic and Western, and the use he has made of the organization's radio station, al-Manar, provide another concrete example of the importance he attaches to the media and psychological warfare as a tool in shaping public attitudes toward the results of Hizbollah's fighting. There is no doubt that this medium will play an important role in the organization's moves even after a ceasefire. If he survives, Nasrallah can be expected to show the target audiences that are important to him in Lebanon and the Arab and Islamic world how Hizbollah emerged the victor in this battle. He is expected to make it clear to his listeners that his organization fought on behalf of Lebanon in order to protect it from Israeli aggression, and to disregard the fact that he had no government or public backing for his actions.

Nasrallah will conceal the personal motives that led to the kidnapping, out of a desire for a prestigious tactical achievement intended to strengthen his image as a credible leader whose word is his honor, and make Israel accountable for the destructive results



least, hold on to those that are undamaged. Yet the focus on attempts to limit Hizbollah's conventional military strength is liable to shift its activity center to the terror sphere. Since direction and activation of terror are, by their nature, clandestine activities, it is harder to prove them and impose public accountability on their supporters and operators. Therefore, we can expect that following this current confrontation Hizbollah will continue to nurture and exploit with even greater intensity its ties with terror organizations, Palestinian terror net-

and Iran to avoid such activity in an atmosphere of intolerance toward international terror following 9/11 and due to their ability to further their interests vis-à-vis Israel within its borders. Nonetheless, it appears that Hizbollah will not find it difficult to renew its terror activities, if necessary. The organization has another option for perpetrating terrorist acts abroad that will distance it from incriminating evidence, namely by activating Palestinian elements such as Islamic Jihad or foreign Islamic competitors that in the past have enjoyed the sup-

that are evident throughout Lebanon and whose long-term damage has yet to be assessed. At the same time, he

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**Nasrallah is expected to wage a propaganda battle that will present the organization as a shining example of tenacious fighting and a role model for Islamic fighters worldwide.**

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will play up the way his organization fought successfully against the IDF, how it captured the soldiers and prevented their forced release without receiving anything in return – even if he does not receive the price he demanded for them. He will emphasize the severe damage to the Israeli home front – his organization’s success in causing hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens living in the northern towns to flee, as well the heavy damage to the Israeli economy – as the proper way to deal with Israel. Nasrallah, who strives to lead Lebanon in the future and sees himself as part

of an Islamic struggle that transcends Lebanese nationality, is expected to wage a propaganda battle that will present the organization as a shining example of tenacious fighting and a role model for Islamic fighters worldwide. As part of this, he will glorify the determination of his fighters who are willing to sacrifice themselves in the finest tradition of *istishhad*, self-sacrifice for God, which has become the familiar pattern of action by jihadists around the world since Hizbollah presented it for the first time in the early 80s.

Hizbollah’s ability to present the war as a victory and plot its future path will be greatly affected by the progress, duration, and results of the war, and particularly the survival of its current leadership, headed by Nasrallah and his senior military commanders, including the organization’s chief of staff, Imad Mugniyah and his gang, who are among the veterans of the terror network run by the organization in the 80s and 90s. If it turns out that Nasrallah is the one who will conclude the battle on behalf of Hizbollah and navigate it through the thicket of internal political problems and international pressure aimed at

limiting its power, he can be expected to face an important test of his leadership. In contrast, the West, with the aid of pragmatic Arab countries, will also face a test of its ability to deal with a terror organization supported by terror-supporting countries, at least one of which is currently the target of an international effort to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons.

What thus ostensibly appears to be the prevention of Hizbollah’s military-terrorist rehabilitation may un-

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**Psychological warfare is a force multiplier in Hizbollah's strategic arsenal, and the organization makes wise use of it to reinforce its power image and present its limitations and failures as achievements.**

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fold as something whose importance exceeds the Israeli-Lebanese conflict and may have severe repercussions, both in the region and beyond.

# Reactions in the Arab World: Blurring the Traditional Lines

Emily Landau

One of the interesting aspects of the conflict between Hizbollah and Israel relates to positions that Arab states have taken on the unfolding developments. In an unusual step, immediately after news broke of the kidnapping of the IDF soldiers on the northern border, Egypt and Jordan spoke out against Hizbollah; they described the actions of the organization as inappropriate and irresponsible. The Saudi foreign minister joined the harsh criticism and added that Hizbollah's actions are an uncalculated adventure that sets the region back years and endangers the Arab world "without having received approval from the central government and without coordination with Arab states." These positions were reiterated at an emergency session of the Arab League that convened four days after the Hizbollah attack to deliberate the developments in the north. The assembly disclosed the differences of opinion in the Arab world regarding Hizbollah, with Syria, the main supporter of the organization among Arab states, taking a position contrary to that of the moderate states.

Against the backdrop of the stances expressed against Hizbollah in the first week of fighting, US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack noted that the states that criticized the organization – in other words, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia – will have an important role to play in exerting pressure on the states that support Hizbollah, i.e., Syria and Iran. Several days later it was reported that the Saudi king had discussed the situation in Lebanon with the Iranian president, and later the Saudi foreign minister traveled to the US for talks with President Bush and Secretary

of State Condoleezza Rice. Are we in fact witnessing new regional dynamics, characterized by different public fault lines within the Arab world?

The position of the three aforesaid states in this matter is indeed significant and reflects their willingness to deviate clearly and publicly from the accepted pattern of automatic condemnation of Israel whenever Israel fights against any Arab element. In so doing they have revealed differences of opinion on a subject that generally provides fertile ground for creating a consensus. Moreover, such declarations challenge traditionally held positions in the Arab public, and

thereby accentuate the gaps between the governments and the population in these states.

The explanation for the unusual responses of the three states lies in the wider regional context. In fact, the reactions against Hizbollah reflect the frustration of the moderate states not only with Islamic extremism but also, and perhaps primarily, with the actions of Iran – in particular, its attempts to strengthen its regional standing via its nuclear program. The three states that condemned Hizbollah are Arab states that are highly concerned with Iran's nuclear activity, although it is difficult for them to

express this concern openly due not only to their real fear of Iran, but because of a prevalent norm that makes it difficult to condemn Iran's nuclear program as long as there is no determined opposition to Israel (which is perceived as a nuclear power).

In the current crisis, Hizbollah's aggression on Israel's sovereign soil without any provocation on Israel's part made it a prime target for condemnation and offered a double reward. Arab states succeeded in conveying a direct message to Hizbollah – an organization that symbolizes the threat posed by Islamic extremists – and an indirect message to Iran, which supports Hizbollah. In leveling their criticism against the organization's military action, the states were careful not to lay explicit blame at Iran's door, but rather chose the route of implicit innuendo. Thus without addressing the question of the exact nature of relations between Iran and Hizbollah – whether we are talking about a puppet organization, or an organization that is far more motivated by domestic Lebanese considerations, or something in between the two – what we clearly see is that there is a link between Iran and Hizbollah in terms of the similar attitudes they generate among other

states: both are considered to be elements that endanger stability in the Middle East. Iran's clear and public support of Hizbollah's current actions only serves to strengthen the concern and frustration with the organization.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the position expressed by the three states is in itself tenuous. Mubarak denied reports in the Israeli media of an Egyptian-Jordanian-Saudi front against Hizbollah, and blocked Secretary of State Rice's official visit to Cairo aimed at enlisting the moderate Arab states against Iran and Syria, with the excuse that it was not suitable for Egypt to host Rice while the IDF bombed Beirut. At the meeting of the Saudi delegation with President Bush and Secretary of State Rice in Washington, Saudi officials were careful to avoid anything that might be construed as if Saudi Arabia were acting as an emissary of the US. This shows that the positions of the three states might easily change.

On the other hand, due to the wider regional context in which the three states expressed their position, the stance they have taken against Hizbollah is important and offers potential for serving as a basis to

strengthen the more moderate voices in the Middle East. One may join these statements to the important mediating efforts of Egypt in the Israeli-Palestinian context over the past two years – efforts that began at least one year before the disengagement and are continuing with contacts relating to the release of the kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit.

There is clearly a common interest between Israel and the moderate Arab states with regard to Iran's regional ambitions and the danger of extreme Islamic elements in the Middle East, acting with or without Iran's support. It is important to recognize that in these terms a rare political opportunity has emerged – a narrow window of opportunity that has opened because of the current crisis. Nevertheless, there remains a long list of issues separating Israel and the Arab states, and care must be taken when attempting to build on shared interests in the context of inter-state relations. At the very least, care should be taken not to complicate matters for governments that have adopted potentially unpopular stances by forcing them to choose sides between Israel or the US and what they view as Arab interests.

# Possible Resolutions to the Conflict in the North

Shlomo Brom

In the war in Lebanon, Israel finds itself in a new kind of conflict, engaged against a sub-state organization that in some respects has the military might of a state and is able to threaten a large percentage of the civilian population. At the same time, the organization still has the characteristics of a terror and guerilla organization. It benefits from the cover of a civilian population and when it is attacked by a superior force, it scatters and melts into the populated areas to regroup and renew the fighting from among people who live under occupation-like conditions. The war in Lebanon cannot, therefore, end in a military victory in the normal sense, meaning that the enemy loses its will to fight and it becomes possible to dictate a new political reality. Even if Hizbollah loses all military confrontations and the whole of Lebanon is occupied, Hizbollah will continue to operate as an underground organization against the occupying army. It can be assumed that in such a situation, Israel will find itself in a predicament similar to that of the American army in Iraq, but against a better trained and more effective rival.

These parameters imply that the best possible military result that Israel can expect to achieve is a situation

in which Hizbollah and Lebanon suffer serious damage. This means that the organization's ability to attack Israel is considerably reduced, and thus it will have paid a heavy price for violating the rules of the game that Israel is willing to tolerate. At the same time, Lebanon will have paid a price that will generate motivation, at

therefore define realistic goals for itself that can be achieved within a reasonable time scale and are based on realistic military gains.

The best possible situation for Israel is one in which Security Council resolution 1559 is implemented – Hizbollah is disarmed and becomes a political movement only – but it is

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**The war in Lebanon cannot end in a military victory in the normal sense, meaning that the enemy loses its will to fight and it becomes possible to dictate a new political reality in the disputed arena.**

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least among the non-Shiite majority, to work to change the situation and to impose its sovereignty over the entire country.

Accordingly, in order to translate the military situation into a settlement that will stabilize the situation on the Israel-Lebanon border, political action is required, with Israel's partners being Lebanon, Arab states, and the international community. The more ambitious the settlement Israel strives to achieve, the more difficult it will be to realize in terms of feasibility, the time required, and the extent of necessary military achievements. The Israeli government must

doubtful if this is a realistic goal. In terms of Hizbollah, its principal asset is its military ability. It will not agree to disarm when it is clear that it is ending the war "on its own two feet" and retains the ability to attack Israel's home front. As far as it is concerned, consent to disarm means surrender, nor can it be disarmed by force. The Lebanese government is weak and splintered and lacks public legitimacy. Many of those serving in the Lebanese army are Shiites who support Hizbollah. Moreover, there is no international party that is ready to volunteer to send effective military forces to Lebanon that can help to

disarm Hizbollah. As such, Israel will have to make do with limited aims.

There will be a need for security arrangements that address two basic issues: Hizbollah's armed activity in southern Lebanon, and the positioning of long-range rockets in Lebanon.

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### **The more ambitious the settlement Israel strives to achieve, the more difficult it will be to realize in terms of feasibility, the time required, and the extent of necessary military achievements.**

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Israel has an interest to free its border of Hizbollah military presence, and its general demand is to return the area to state sovereignty, to Lebanon, and station the Lebanese army there. The problem here is that the Lebanese army is not a reliable party, due both to its weakness and the weakness of the government that it serves and also due to the strong Shiite element in the army. There is great symbolic importance to stationing the Lebanese army up to the border as an indication of Lebanese sovereignty and at least the partial implementation of Security Council resolution 1559. However, an additional body, a multinational force, will be needed to provide monitoring, backup, and assistance.

Currently, a United Nations force (UNIFIL) is deployed in southern Lebanon, but this force lacks capability and credibility, and it is doubtful whether it can fill the required role, even if it is reinforced. There are several reasons for this. First, the force does not have a clear mandate to pre-

vent entry by armed elements other than the Lebanese army to this area and to use force if necessary. Second, the forces controlled by the UN secretariat comprise elements from states that have different agendas, a situation that creates a complex lack of

cohesiveness and weak leadership. Third, the military effectiveness of the units is limited. Based on experience with international forces over the last decades, a multinational force is effective only if it has a clear mandate from the Security Council that gives its action legitimacy, and if the force is itself an effective military force operated by an effective subcontractor. There are two examples of subcontractors that operated effective

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### **It is clear that without the presence of a multinational force, Hizbollah soldiers will trickle back into south Lebanon, and within a short space of time Israel will find itself back to square one.**

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military forces with a clear mandate: NATO in the Balkans, and the Australian army in East Timor.

The presence of an international force will also exact a cost from Israel, as such a force will limit Israel's freedom of action in the area where

it is deployed. This may spark friction between Israel and the countries contributing to the force, and thus lower efficiency. Nonetheless, in the current reality, it is clear that without the presence of a multinational force and regardless of the nature of the arrangements that will end the fighting in Lebanon, Hizbollah soldiers will trickle back into south Lebanon, and within a short space of time Israel will find itself back to square one.

With regard to limiting the long-range rockets in Lebanon, it is hard to predict if this is a feasible demand that will be accepted. Even if it is accepted, an efficient supervisory mechanism will be required to ensure that the demand is implemented. This mechanism too will have to be international in nature and could be part of the force that would be stationed in south Lebanon.

Another issue that should be addressed is whether Israel has an interest in Arab participation in the par-

ticular international force. It is likely that this is in Israel's best interests – not because the Arab contribution would make the force more effective, but it would offer Arab legitimacy. It is also likely that there is what to be gained from reviving and upgrad-

ing the channels that can allow the communication of messages and the agreement on an accord. Such a mechanism was established as part of the Grapes of Wrath understandings and included occasional meetings of representatives of Israel, Lebanon, Syria, the US, and France, as well as understandings relating to the rules of the game between the sides.

The feasibility of these solutions depends on the ability to devise a combination of military and political moves that will be acceptable to all the parties. The military achievements that would be required for this to happen include:

- A serious blow to Hizbollah's military capability, to the extent that it generates strong motivation for a ceasefire, even if this is only to re-group militarily.

- Reducing Hizbollah's ability to strike at the home front to a degree that convinces the organization that Israel can continue with the military operations over time without paying a significant price. As long as Hizbollah believes Israel will be the first to balk, such arrangements do not appear feasible.

- Significant "cleansing" of southern Lebanon of Hizbollah's military presence. It is easier for an international force to prevent entry of armed elements to a region than remove them from there.

In any case, military gains alone will not achieve the objective. A wide international coalition is required that will include members of the Security Council, the G-8, and the leading Arab states. Such a coalition will apply intense pressure on Lebanon, Hizbollah, and its Iranian patrons. A related issue is the way in which settlements are perceived. If they are viewed as a clear victory for Israel and

ment of this sort, the Israeli government will also find it hard to accept due to the high level of expectation it set at the start of the hostilities: disarming of Hizbollah and creating a new order in Lebanon. It is important for the Israeli government to create a reasonable system of expectations with regard to the possible results of the conflict and the strategy for ending the conflict.

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### **A fundamental change in Israel's situation vis-à-vis Lebanon will take place only if Israel addresses basic problems of the northern arena: in other words, reopening a dialogue with Syria.**

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defeat for Hizbollah, the chances of Hizbollah accepting them are small, even if it suffers very heavy military blows. Thus, the settlements must be proffered as designed principally to stabilize Lebanon and return life to its normal routine, with Hizbollah recognized as a legitimate partner to the accords. Resolving the two areas of conflict – the problem of Shab'a Farms (for example, by persuading Syria to declare that it is Lebanese territory) and the issue of the Lebanese prisoners in Israel – can encourage acceptance of the proposed settlements.

In addition to the difficulty in persuading Hizbollah to accept a settle-

In conclusion, any arrangement made after the end of the war will be fragile and unstable in the long term. A fundamental change in Israel's situation vis-à-vis Lebanon will take place only if Israel addresses basic problems of the northern arena: in other words, reopening a dialogue with Syria that will lead to renewal of talks between them. Even if Syria has lost much of its power, including in terms of Hizbollah, it is still a key factor in the Iran-Syria-Hizbollah axis. Removing the Syrian link from this axis will significantly contribute to the neutralization of the other components.

# Deterrence and its Limitations

Yair Evron

## The Meaning of Deterrence

Deterrence is a highly complex process that first and foremost includes the principle of threatening to use force as a preventive or punitive measure, with a view to preventing violence on the part of the enemy. However, the success of deterrence is contingent on a set of political, strategic, and psychological factors. The greater the punitive capability towards the party to be deterred (i.e., military advantage), the more effective the deterrence. On the other hand, the greater the frustration of the deterred party with the political situation, the greater its will-

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**Despite Hizbollah being a sub-state actor, deterrence threats could still be used against it.**

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ingness to challenge the status quo. In addition, there is the resolve factor, in other words, the willingness of the deterring party to use punitive measures. The latter dimension is elusive and has complex ramifications.

The deterrence process has several dimensions. These include:

*Mutual deterrence:* in numerous conflict situations the two sides try to deter each other. In this regard there is sometimes even “deterrence dialogue” that involves the use of

different signals: declarations, “silent” moves through moving military forces, and occasionally even limited military action.

*Israeli deterrence against regional countries:* due to its clear military advantage on the one hand, and the peace agreements it has with Egypt and Jordan on the other hand, and also due to the absence of a clear basic interest of most of the other Arab states in launching an attack on Israel (with some states there are even shared interests), Israel enjoys a stable deterrence.

*Israeli deterrence against non-state players:* deterrence is generally effective when the deterred party is a state with a formal decision-making center that controls the state’s elements of power. Nevertheless, one can also achieve

deterrence with sub-state elements under different conditions. Thus, for example, the deterrence equation with the Palestinians is based on two main components: the level of political achievements the Palestinians expect to achieve and their consequent level of frustration in the absence of political progress. At the same time, there is the harsh Israeli response to terror and guerilla activity, which also wreaks extensive and cumulative damage on Palestinian society. In

the absence of political progress, Palestinian violence repeatedly erupts in the face of Israeli repression. Fatah and Hamas accepted the ceasefire in January 2005 due to Israeli military pressure and the fatigue in Palestinian society on the one hand, and with expectations of a renewal of the political process on the other. The lack of a central element controlling the Palestinian public naturally makes it difficult for Israeli deterrence to bear fruit and in fact limits it, but it does not entirely prevent the possibility of creating a balance of deterrence within the context of some political process, even for a limited period.

*Mini-deterrence balances:* it is possible to create a limited deterrence balance between states or between a state and a sub-state actor. This does not cover the entire conflict but is limited to specific aspects within it. Such balances at times require “reinforcement,” either by means of political settlements or through the use of limited force.

## The Israel-Hizbollah Deterrence Equation

In May 2000 Israel withdrew its forces (and the South Lebanese Army) from southern Lebanon. This withdrawal took place as part of a political settlement that was ratified by the UN and enjoyed the support of the

international community, including the Lebanese government. Even so, Hizbollah sprang into action shortly after the withdrawal and launched its first attack on Mount Dov. Since then, Hizbollah has launched assaults every few months (other than during one longer period in which the violence ceased) from the eastern sector in south Lebanon. Over time these attacks became something of a regular ritual: opening fire on Israeli positions and (in general) avoiding attacking civilian settlements. The IDF responded by firing on Hizbollah positions and for the most part, clashes were of short duration only.

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

These rules of the game are in practice the result of a reciprocal mini-deterrence balance. Israel de-

terred Hizbollah from resuming extensive strikes on civilian populations, while Hizbollah deterred Israel from launching a general assault aimed at destroying the organization.

not completely break the rules of the game, but it did significantly breach them. It shot at civilian targets (which it had done previously but only on a more limited scale). It operated in the

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## **Israel, which in any case was not predisposed to the prevailing rules of the game imposed by Hizbollah, was looking to use military action to bring about fundamental changes in southern Lebanon.**

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This mutual deterrence was based on the mutual punitive military threat on the one hand, and socio-political elements on the other. Hizbollah was aware of the costs that would be borne by its political constituency – the Lebanese in general, but particularly the Shiites – if it breached the rules of the game. For Israel, it was convenient to resist being drawn into wider action that would disrupt life in its northern region.

Thus, despite Hizbollah being a sub-state actor, deterrence threats could still be used against it. The paradox is that because Hizbollah is an active political player in Lebanon that is looking to increase its political power, it was forced into two opposite directions: within the domestic Lebanese political arena it was constantly forced to demonstrate its unique ability to act as a “shield” against Israel, and therefore had to resort to its repertoire of violent provocations. Conversely, its role as a Lebanese player forced it to take care not to spark a large-scale Israeli offensive.

In its July 12 action Hizbollah did

western sector, and in a wide area. Finally, it carried out the kidnapping, which while reminiscent of the October 2000 abductions was a provocation it was unable to repeat since. The combination of all these factors ultimately broke Israel's deterrence threshold and prompted the heavy Israeli reaction. Since Hizbollah probably believed that it had not violated the rules of the game, it likely did not anticipate a massive Israeli response.

### **The Scope of the Israeli Response**

In order to maintain the specific deterrence balance towards Hizbollah, it was sufficient to mount an intensive but limited military operation. But Israel, which in any case was not predisposed to the prevailing rules of the game imposed by Hizbollah, was looking to use military action to bring about fundamental changes in southern Lebanon. In order to achieve these objectives there was a need for larger forces and a wider arena of operations. Yet the realization of these broad goals is doubtful, and goes far

beyond just maintaining the deterrent effect.

As for Israel's deterrence image, Israel's overall military power ensures that its general deterrence capability against various elements in the region is maintained. That would be the case even if Israel did not re-

the kidnapped soldiers – was liable to impact on Palestinian conduct in the future.

The future of strategic-political relations between Israel and the Palestinians will ultimately be decided not by outside elements, but mainly by interaction between the two sides.

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## **The massive Israeli response in Lebanon conveys the extent of the punitive action Israel is ready to inflict on parties that act against it and against its social infrastructures.**

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spond, or responded at a later stage. However, Hizbollah's attempt to assume a degree of leadership in the Israeli-Palestinian arena, an attempt that was reflected in the organization's general behavior of late and was reiterated in the conditions it demanded – the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in return for

This is also the case with regard to Israeli-Palestinian mini-deterrence. However, outside elements are liable to interfere or may help to stabilize this balance. The massive Israeli response in Lebanon conveys the extent of the punitive action Israel is ready to inflict on parties that act against it and against its social infrastructures.

This may be of import if and when Israel begins to progress towards political accords with the Palestinians or towards a unilateral solution such as the convergence plan. It should not be assumed that Israel will be capable of implementing these measures while the violence and terror continues on the northern border or if waged in other arenas by any Palestinian organization.

In conclusion, deterrence is not the ultimate factor in conflict management or resolution. It is one strategy of several designed to stabilize conflict relations. In many cases it succeeds for a limited period. Moreover, it is not a substitute for political accords. Its role is to stabilize the military relations during conflict, and provide support for a political agreement when conditions are ripe for it to evolve.

# Israel's Conflicts with Hizbollah and Hamas: Are They Parts of the Same War?

Mark A. Heller

At first glance, there appears to be a tight linkage between the crisis on the northern border and the recent escalation of Israeli-Palestinian violence. In both cases, the spark was the killing of some Israeli soldiers and the abduction of others by non-state Islamist actors (Hamas and Hizbollah), supported by Syria and Iran, who infiltrated across internationally recognized borders from territories from which Israel had unilaterally withdrawn. In both cases, the attacks/abductions were preceded or accompanied by rocket fire onto Israeli territory. In both cases, the attacks/abductions provoked large-scale Israeli military responses meant to secure not only the release of the abducted soldiers without any concessions in return but also a fundamental change in the political reality along and across the borders in question. Finally, the action of each non-state actor resonated positively with the other (and its public). Indeed, some of the explanations/justifications of Hizbollah's action referred to support of the Palestinian cause and specifically stipulated the inclusion of Palestinian prisoners in any exchange that might be carried out to secure the release of the captured Israeli soldiers.

These apparent similarities go some way toward explaining the re-

gional and international reactions to the two events. In the major countries of the Arab world, governments except that of Syria have candidly expressed misgivings about the adventurism of non-state actors who hijack national agendas and arrogate to themselves decisions about war and peace. And in the international arena, there has been significant tolerance if not approval of Israeli military escalation.

Upon closer examination, however, the linkage begins to fray. The first distinction concerns the identity of the perpetrators. While Hizbollah appears to be a uniform and highly disciplined actor, Hamas has been showing growing signs of organizational confusion. The exact identity of the Palestinians who precipitated the crisis on the Gaza front by attacking at Kerem Shalom is not certain. Initial communiqués following the kidnapping of Corporal Gilad Shalit indicated that three groups had taken part in the operation: the Hamas military wing (Izz a-din al-Qassam Brigades), the Popular Resistance Committees, and a previously-unknown entity calling itself the Army of Islam. Whatever the precise composition of the operational unit, the more significant uncertainty concerns the coordination with/subordination to Hamas's political wing, which is itself divided between an "inside" branch

that since Legislative Council elections in January has controlled the government of the Palestinian Authority, and an "outside" branch – the Political Bureau – that is located in Damascus and headed by Khaled Masha'al and his deputy, Musa Abu Marzouk. Judging by the somewhat confused response to the abduction by the "inside" leadership – Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and even the reputed "militant," Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar – the operation that precipitated the Gaza crisis was launched without their approval or even their prior knowledge. The Damascus-based leadership, however, immediately expressed its unrestrained support for the operation. This does not necessarily mean that the military wing does not act independently, but it does suggest that if it takes any political direction at all, the direction comes from outside.

If so, that would reflect the differing perspectives, hence, divergent interests of the "inside" and "outside." Since taking office, the former has had to deal with demands that it provide something to the Palestinian public beyond fleeting emotional gratification – demands that it has thus far been unable to meet and cannot possibly expect to meet so long as it is tainted by the "terrorist" label and subject to Israeli boycott and international sanc-

tions of one sort or another. The “outside” leadership bears no such burden and therefore has much less reason to be concerned with the implications of being tarred by the same brush as Hizbollah – a pariah in the international community, in parts of the Sunni Arab world, and even in the non-Shiite sectors of Lebanese society.

A second distinction concerns the prism through which events in Lebanon are viewed by the political leadership of Hamas, and in this respect the Palestinian perspectives from Gaza and Damascus do converge to some extent. Hizbollah’s challenge to Israel has unquestionably raised Hassan Nasrallah’s political stock among Palestinians. Large-scale demonstrations of support have taken place in Palestinian towns, Hizbollah’s flag is very much in evidence, and pictures of Nasrallah are widely displayed alongside (though not in place of) Yasser Arafat and Ahmed Yassin. In this sense, Nasrallah has emerged in 2006 as the non-Palestinian champion of the Palestinian cause, much like Saddam Hussein in 1990 and Gamal Abd al-Nasser in 1956 and again in 1967. But Palestinian political leaders who themselves aspire to that status may well view this development with some measure of ambivalence. After all, a Hizbollah victory (however defined) in the confrontation with Israel might cast a shadow over their own personal prominence, whereas a defeat, however dispiriting in general terms, would still leave them – especially the “inside” – free to continue pursuing their local agenda.

That perspective points to a third distinction: the implications of international involvement and possible intervention. Until the outbreak of the Lebanese crisis, any international attention to the region that could be spared from Iraq was focused on Israeli attacks on and incursions into Gaza; the damage inflicted there was attracting growing sympathy, and not just in Arab countries – even those whose governments had reservations about the Palestinian attack at Kerem Shalom. This focus sustained hopes that intervention would restrain Israel and perhaps halt the Israeli campaign without imposing on the Hamas leadership unreciprocated, hence, unacceptable political conditions, i.e., an obligation to return Gilad Shalit and enforce a total ceasefire. It even raised the possibility that a show of constructive involvement by the local Hamas political leadership in the prisoner issue, which it signaled some desire (if not any proven ability) to undertake, might pave the way to greater international respectability and acceptance of the Hamas government as a legitimate interlocutor – and recipient of international aid. Those hopes evaporated, at least in the short term, with the outbreak of the crisis on Israel’s northern border, which fixed the world’s attention firmly on Lebanon and allowed Israel to pursue its military actions in Gaza with far fewer constraints. However, international intervention still holds much greater promise for Hamas than it does for Hizbollah. For the latter, almost any intervention will be a setback that could well set in motion a

highly negative dynamic. The only exception would be an imposed unconditional ceasefire that restores the status quo on the eve of Israel’s assault, and that seems an unlikely scenario given the apparent general understanding of the issues at stake, even among major Arab governments.

Notwithstanding these distinctions, however, (and in some respects because of them), one important linkage does exist. The outcome of the confrontation in Lebanon will have major implications for the future of Hamas in particular, and of the Palestinian-Israeli relationship in general. Nasrallah and Hizbollah cannot emerge entirely unscathed from the crisis with Israel. But given the framing of the issue throughout the region, it is enough for them not to incur a humiliating defeat in order to make a credible claim of victory. Should that happen, the discourse and logic of “resistance” will be given a further boost, and any argument in favor of moderation or pragmatism by Hamas will be discredited for the foreseeable future; instead, the urge to emulate Hizbollah will become even more powerful. By contrast, if some combination of Israeli military action, outside involvement, and Lebanese domestic dynamics results in the discrediting of what Hizbollah represents, then greater Israeli deterrence together with greater underlying regional and international responsiveness to Palestinian political needs may well strengthen Palestinian preferences, if not for the replacement of Hamas, then at least for its pursuit of an alternate path.

# Dispelling Beliefs: The War in Lebanon as a Test Case

Zaki Shalom

The current war in Lebanon has exposed some ideas and beliefs common among much of the political leadership and Israeli society regarding the State of Israel, its use of force, and the goals it pursues in using force. Some of these beliefs have accompanied the State of Israel for years and have surfaced previously in various confrontations and military clashes. There is no doubt that these conceptions wield great significance vis-à-vis Israel's overall strategic behavior in recent years, and particularly in the present war in Lebanon. Precisely because of their weight within Israeli society and their impact upon the formulation of Israel's strategies, these beliefs invite critical examination, which in turn can pinpoint the weaknesses and risks they incur. Three central conceptions will be analyzed below.

***There is no justification for Israel to initiate military actions unless it is significantly provoked.***

In the wake of the fighting, many have asked in amazement how it was possible for the State of Israel to allow an enemy organization like Hizbollah to amass so much power in recent years without undertaking any action to stop it. The massive and prolonged shooting of rockets, artillery shells, and Katyushas on the northern areas of Israel, despite the wide-ranging aerial and ground activities carried out by Israel against Hizbollah and its infrastructure, clearly shows the immense firepower accumulated by Hizbollah over the last few years. Apparently Israel had detailed information on the increas-

ing power of the organization and the strategic weapon systems it received from Iran and Syria. Nonetheless, it refrained from initiating military activity, which might have obstructed the ongoing buildup.

Hizbollah did not limit itself to this rearmament process. Following the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, it built a long line of fortified positions along the border, close to the IDF positions, blatantly ignor-

ing the relevant UN decisions. Even this provocative activity of Hizbollah did not prompt Israel to attack the organization in order to push it back from the northern border. It should be noted that Israel's restraint essentially contradicted warnings of senior Israeli leaders, in the wake of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon, to the effect that Hizbollah's provocative behavior against Israel would prompt a massive reaction by Israel against the organization.

From Hizbollah's perspective, Israel's reactions towards its challenging behavior were likely interpreted as an obvious reluctance on Israel's part to overturn the status quo. Israel, the organization probably conjectured, would not welcome Hizbollah's behavior and would retaliate appropri-



ately against the deviant and hostile actions they engaged in. At the same time, it seemed to be ready to absorb a fairly high number of injuries if the threshold of hostile activity did not exceed too high a level. Israel, the organization most probably assumed, was still haunted by the trauma of the war in Lebanon that began in June 1982, and its leaders would do their utmost to avoid entanglement in a similar situation.

Today it is clear that Israel's passive reactions in the face of Hizbollah activity and the growing risks to Israel cannot be explained by a lack of information. It is also not likely that it was widely believed that time was on Israel's side, and that it would ultimately be possible for Israel to achieve its aims against the organization without resorting to the use of force.

It seems fair to assume that the main reason for the Israeli leadership's refusal to engage in military initiatives against Hizbollah is rooted in the belief that such a maneuver would not be granted legitimacy in public opinion in this country, and certainly not abroad. This assessment is based on a system of values and norms that has become increasingly prevalent in Israeli society, especially following the war in Lebanon in 1982. According to this system of values, the State of Israel is only "authorized" to initiate a military-type action as a response to a violent and challenging activity against it, of a type and scope that does not allow it any other alternative but to react in that way. Even

then, its reaction must be proportionate to the damage it sustains.

One of the focal points of criticism against the 1982 war in Lebanon (called Operation Peace for the Galilee) emphasized that in the period preceding the campaign there was a relatively quiet time on the Israel-Lebanon border. As such, the military activities of Israel were to a large extent perceived as an indication of Israel's eagerness to bring this "calm" period to an end and the fac-



tor that actually ended the "respite." Similar criticism was voiced against the IDF in the wake of targeted killings of Palestinians that occurred unprovoked by specific prior acts of terror. The most apparent criticisms followed the targeted killing of Salah Shehadeh in late July 2002. This targeted killing, so the critics claimed, brought an end to the period of calm, and thwarted an anticipated agreement with militant Palestinian orga-

nizations on a ceasefire with Israel.

It seems to me that this line of opinion, which still prevails among leading sectors within Israel, made it very difficult for the State of Israel to engage in military initiatives against Hizbollah throughout the process of its armament and force buildup. Only now, after an "excess" of provocative and lethal activity on the part of the organization against Israel, which included kidnapping and killing three engineering corps soldiers in October 2000; abducting an Israeli businessman, Elhanan Tannenbaum; sporadic shooting, sometimes deadly, onto IDF positions and against settlements along the border; and finally a planned military operation that resulted in eight IDF soldiers killed and two others abducted, did a general sentiment form that "enough is enough," that Hizbollah went too far, and that by now its activities justified a massive military incursion on Israel's part.

***There is no justification for an attack on Israel after its retreat to the international border.***

The claim that there is no justification for attacking Israel once it withdrew to the international border was heard in official statements and at the highest political levels. Israel has reiterated repeatedly in the last few years that it fulfilled its obligations and withdrew in May 2000 to the international border with Lebanon; it even received the approval of the UN secretary-general and therefore there

is no justification for hostile action against it.

Israel indeed withdrew to the international border with Lebanon. Yet it is questionable if the very emphasis of this argument serves the interests of the State of Israel. The peace process that was concluded with peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and with the Oslo agreements was based on a fundamental principle that even if issues of contention remained between the parties, they would henceforth be resolved by diplomatic means alone, by negotiations, and without the use of force. No controversy can justify the use of force against Israel. It seems to me that emphasizing Israel's withdrawal to the international border as an argument that delegitimizes militant provocations against Israel jeopardizes and even undermines the validity of the above principle.

Moreover, the emphasis on Israel's withdrawal to the international border to negate the legitimacy of aggression against it contains within it yet another great risk. The corollary is that in the areas where Israel has not withdrawn to the international border, for example in Judea and Samaria, its enemies have a "license" to act against it. And finally, such an argument can diminish and even wrest from Israel one of the main achievements of the disengagement from Gaza, namely, the recognition

by the United States of Israel's right, in the framework of an agreement, to extend its sovereignty to areas where there are Jewish population centers, even if they exist beyond of the Green Line.

### ***Israel has no argument with Lebanon or with its government.***

Formal declarations by Israel and of its leaders repeatedly emphasize that Israel sees the government of Lebanon as responsible for all the activity taking place on its soil against Israel. Lebanon, it is agreed, is also the party that is responsible for the fate of the Israeli captives and for their safe return to Israel. At the same time, however, there are repeated statements that there is no hostility between Israel and the government of Lebanon, and that the only quarrel that Israel has is with Hizbollah. One ought to question whether these latter statements serve Israel's interests.

It should be stressed that the issue does not relate to the practical policies of Israel regarding Lebanon. These tend, and rightly so, to be responsive to the demands of the American government, which calls upon Israel to prevent harm to "the fragile democracy in Lebanon." In other words, Israel must focus its attacks on Hizbollah and perhaps on Syria too, but not on targets that may disturb the stability of the Lebanese regime. Under

these circumstances, the question that arises here is whether it is advisable for Israel to give Lebanon a "credit allowance" when issuing its political statements. The aggressive acts by Hizbollah against Israel emerge from the geographic area of a sovereign state. Not only is the government of Lebanon not prepared to take de facto responsibility for what is happening in its territories; it is also not ready to announce its reservations about Hizbollah activity against Israel, as did, for example, the Druze leader Walid Junblat, and it certainly is not ready to take any practical action to limit Hizbollah activity against Israel. Under these circumstances it is unclear if there is any point in Israel removing Lebanon from the indicted and asserting that Israel has no quarrel with this country. At the very least, silence is called for.

### **Conclusion**

The war in Lebanon has exposed conceptual flaws in the positions that the State of Israel has adopted and presented to the outside world. Some of these flaws have plagued Israel for years. It is therefore appropriate for a public debate to take place on the benefits and harm that are caused by these positions. This debate will facilitate the consolidation of solid principles by the State of Israel and by Israeli society on these important topics.

# Back to Ground Rules: Some Limitations of Airpower in the Lebanon War

Noam Ophir

On June 3, 1999, following seventy-eight days of intensive aerial operations in Balkan skies, the NATO military campaign in Yugoslavia came to an end. A famous British historian was quick to observe that June 3 marked the first time a war was decided by airpower alone, and will forever be remembered as one of the most significant turning points in military history.<sup>1</sup> Many concurred, and Operation Allied Force, as the NATO operation was known, has since become the yardstick by which any large scale aerial activity is measured.

In Israel many were eager to compare Israel's Operation Change of Direction in Lebanon<sup>2</sup> with Operation Allied Force, notwithstanding the fundamental differences between the two operations, which are outside the scope of this article. Yet in the days following the start of the Lebanon operation, especially with the incessant launching of rockets at northern cities and towns, including Haifa, opinions were soon voiced regarding the so-called failure of the air force to achieve the operation's objectives.

1 John Keegan, "Please, Mr Blair, Never Take Such a Risk Again," *Daily Telegraph*, June 6, 1999.

2 The initial name of the operation was "Just Reward."

Despite hundreds of sorties flown by the air force twenty-four hours a day every day, it seemed that airpower had disappointed by failing to meet the expectations held by many: a decisive aerial victory in Lebanon.

A full assessment of the actual situation shows that aerial power did not fail in Lebanon, just like it would be wrong to say that it single-handedly won the war in Yugoslavia. The fact is that airpower is no magic solution. Though it has many capabilities, and more now than ever, there are ends it cannot satisfactorily meet.

## The Challenge of Mobile Targets

What can a modern air force do? As the recent wars of the United States in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans have proven, and as in the early days of operation Change of Direction, the smart use of fighter planes and attack helicopters carrying precision guided munitions, along with supporting C<sup>3</sup>I systems, affords considerable achievements in hitting strategic targets such as command centers, army bases, and infrastructure targets. The capability of a small number of aircraft to carry large amounts of precision guided munitions and to hit the target's critical spot, day and night in almost any

weather, is remarkable. If the mission planner and the air crew know where the target should be struck, primarily thanks to accurate intelligence, it will most likely be struck. The attack can be carried out from very short range, but if the aerial force is under threat, it can be carried out, with no less accuracy, from a range of dozens or even hundreds of kilometers by using standoff munitions. In this respect the Israeli air force is second only to the US air force, and in some respects might even surpass it. In fact, it is doubtful that any other air force in the world other than the two mentioned, including West European air forces, is capable of executing a prolonged aerial campaign of this sort.

Nevertheless, and as was true for previous aerial campaigns as well, the air force has a hard time successfully engaging targets labeled as low-signature and time-sensitive. This means mobile targets that are not prominent on the ground and can carry out their tasks while keeping a relatively low profile and quickly escaping the area. Examples include mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems as well as launchers for surface-to-surface rockets (SSR) and for surface-to-surface missiles (SSM).

With SSM launchers and even

more so SSR launchers, the task is especially complicated. Often an SSR launcher is no more than a few barrels joined together and hidden well in the bushes. The launcher does not require a large support system, and a

of continuous, real time intelligence and an ongoing presence of precision means of attack in the area, be they aerial (as in fighter planes, attack helicopters, or other platforms), ground-based, or naval (as in long-

## **No Airpower Decision, Yet Once More**

What then can one expect from the air force? The experience gained by the Americans in their efforts to stop Iraqi SSM fire during the 1991 Gulf War shows that you can impair the efficiency and functioning of SSM / SSR even without scoring accurate hits on the launchers themselves. During the entire war, the Americans did not succeed in hitting a single SSM launcher, despite assigning considerable forces to this task. However, the intensive air operations, alongside the use of special operations forces on the ground, affected the accuracy rate of Iraqi SSM fire as the fighting went on. This achievement was the result of continuous air operations over the launch areas and attacks on SSM support sites. In the case of SSR there are fewer such sites,

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## **Airpower is no magic solution. Though it has many capabilities, and more now than ever, there are ends it cannot satisfactorily meet.**

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small team is sufficient for operating it. In addition, contrary to many SAM systems, operation of the launcher does not require transmission or other activities that may be picked up in advance by electronic sensors. Thus nearly the only way to identify the launcher is visually, and since the target is an easy one to camouflage and is difficult to distinguish from civilian targets, e.g. a truck, typically the launcher will only be spotted as a result of identifying the launch itself. This has two implications: first, the launch must be identified early and the information relayed quickly to the attacking equipment. The entire process, referred to as “closing the loop,” must be completed in a very short time period, only a few minutes, since soon after the launcher will be moved from its location. Second, the identification can only take place after the launcher has launched its payload, i.e., after the potential damage is already underway.

The process of “closing the loop” – locating the launcher, identifying it, directing the attack aircraft, and the attack itself – requires a combination

of range artillery). The greater challenge is the intelligence requirement. The main tool used for this task is the UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle), but a large number of UAVs are needed to cover an area the size of the potential launch sites in Lebanon, and even then absolute accurate reports cannot be guaranteed.

The successes of the air force in “hunting down” SSR launchers in

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## **The air force did not disappoint in the current war in Lebanon. Rather, it did what it can do, but apparently airpower alone cannot determine the outcome of a war, at least not at this stage.**

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Lebanon, as reported by the IDF, are not insignificant. The capabilities and achievements of the Israeli air force in engaging low-signature, time-sensitive targets are probably better than those of any other air force, but they are not the entire story. Even if the air force destroys several launchers every day, the rate is not sufficient and Hizbollah’s stockpile of weapons remains impressive, as evidenced by the ongoing onslaught of Katyushas.

and it is better to attempt to destroy rockets that are stored at one location, rather than when they are dispersed all over. This requires accurate intelligence, which is often unavailable.

Even if the air force should improve its SSR launcher destruction rates, it will not be able to completely remove the threat. Working in parallel to limited deployment of ground forces, the air force will be able to disrupt the rockets’ accuracy and pos-

sibly reduce the quantities launched and the launch rates. To this end two vital resources are required: intelligence and time. It is uncertain that in Operation Change of Direction those two resources are available to the air force to the extent required in order to show significant results any time soon.

In the case of Yugoslavia, the image there too is in fact far less clear-cut. The war did not end after the destruction of the Serbian army's capacity to fight, nor because of decisive hits to strategic targets in Yugoslavia. Its end came about primarily after Serbia had lost the support of its main ally, Russia, and as a result of a threatened ground invasion by NATO. A closer examination of the air operations against Serbian forces shows that in thousands of sorties, in which hundreds of targets were reportedly hit, air strikes only man-

aged to destroy about fifty armored forces and artillery targets. This is an extremely low success rate, especially in view of the many resources allocated to this task over an extensive period of time. And, we might add, this low success rate came with no strikes on the attacking force's home front, in complete contrast to the challenge

eration Change of Direction cannot be construed as a failure. Moreover, it may yet contribute to creating the conditions that will aid the political moves, as was the case, for example, in Yugoslavia. The air force did not disappoint in the current war in Lebanon. Rather, it did what it can do, but in contrast to the writings of the Brit-

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**Even if the air force destroys several launchers every day, this rate is not sufficient, and Hizbollah's stockpile of weapons remains impressive, as evidenced by the ongoing onslaught of Katyushas.**

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facing the Israeli air force in fighting in Lebanon.

Although the Israeli air force, despite its impressive capabilities, cannot achieve the stated operation objectives on its own, its activity in Op-

ish historian, apparently airpower alone cannot determine the outcome of a war, at least not at this stage. This was true in Yugoslavia, and it is true in Lebanon. This is neither a failure nor a disappointment – this is reality.

# The Crisis in Lebanon: An Interim Assessment

Zvi Shtauber

It behooves us to consider possible versions of the confrontation between Israel and Hizbollah had it taken place in the shadow of a nuclear Iran. Would we have reacted as we did to the abduction of soldiers? Would the United States have given us free rein? At this stage the answers to these questions are hypothetical only, but it appears nonetheless that what happens in the current confrontation in Lebanon is primarily a prelude to the next major confrontation (direct or indirect) between Iran and Israel.

The Middle East is undergoing a process of change, due in part to Iran's aspirations of hegemony, the Shiite revival, and the vanishing Iraq of Saddam Hussein, which served to curb Tehran's ambition to penetrate the Arab Orient. The Arab world is in distress, with a visible absence of Muslim leaders who can create broad coalitions and undertake "big moves." The sovereign state is losing power to sectarian players, and the regional balance of power is visibly shifting in favor of the Shiites (who for the first time have assumed power in Iraq) at the expense of Sunni dominance. The reactions of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan have demonstrated the extent to which the Sunnis feel challenged by today's regional tides.

It is still too early to determine the final balance of this confrontation's gains and losses, given that a particu-

lar achievement or show of weakness will impact on a long list of related issues, such as: confrontation of Islamic radicalism, the Palestinian challenge, and issues involving deterrence, decision-making processes in Israel, resilience of Israel's home front, and, of course, the military dimension to the fighting. Nevertheless we can already point to some intermediate conclusions:

1. The main problem in Lebanon is the absence of a sovereign authority willing and capable of enforcing its rule. This is a highly problematic obstacle because of Lebanon's sectarian composition and the Shiite majority, and no multinational force can be a proper substitute for such a sovereign authority. Ironically, the departure of the Syrians, who long served as traditional Israeli leverage to restrain Hizbollah, only made matters worse. Israel has an unquestionable

interest in creating such an authority, both in Lebanon (where this is more difficult) and among the Palestinians, who still constitute Israel's primary conflict arena.

2. In Lebanon, as on the Palestinian court, the gap between vision and complex political reality is clear. This gap does not allow any withdrawal / disengagement / redeployment outside the scope of a stable accord, with a party capable of and willing to enforce it.

3. For Palestinians, Nasrallah and his actions pose a problem, not only due to jealousy or competitiveness over abducting IDF soldiers. Palestinians can only envy the global attention focused on the Lebanese crisis, compared to the attention paid to them during the recent confrontation in Gaza following the abduction of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. This is especially true in view of the gradual

decline in the importance assigned in recent years by the international community to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is safe to assume that the Palestinians are not unaware of the almost total carte blanche the IDF enjoys in Lebanon.

As for the war itself:

1. It seems that the objectives set for the IDF at the outset of the campaign were too ambitious, and senior government members have apparently undergone a process of disillusionment and recalibration with regard to what may be achievable.

2. In Lebanon, yet again, we are witness to the limits of Israel's military capabilities in successfully confronting a guerrilla organization rooted in the civilian population and supported by it.

3. The initial decision not to deploy significant ground troops in Lebanon was the key constraint in not achieving a decisive result in a short time. The decision to call up three reserve divisions serves mul-

challenging problem. Northern Israel will probably endure them until the ceasefire, even if the rate and numbers fired will diminish.

8. Over the years the list of potential targets was significantly improved, and we may hazard a guess that most of the military targets Israel

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5. The emerging picture suggests that Israel will remain in Lebanon longer than it planned or desired, which in turn exposes its soldiers to the dangers familiar from the IDF's previous period in Lebanon.

6. What has happened in Lebanon poses a warning sign for Israel, in view of what is already to some extent in the process of occurring in Gaza. Israel has no answer yet to mortars and high trajectory fire, and the loopholes in supervising the entrance points to the Gaza Strip (despite efforts by the Egyptians and

had defined at the outset of this campaign have been attacked, with intelligence now based on "occasional hunting down of targets."

9. In any case, it is likely that the war in Lebanon will prompt the IDF to reevaluate its allocation of resources between the army and the air force.

As to the Lebanese arena, even should Hizbollah be successful in scoring some achievements in this war, the obvious impression is that the war will add to its distress in the domestic arena and will increase the criticism leveled at it, even by its supporters. At the same time, the war in Lebanon (as long as Hizbollah is not severely impaired and the war does not expand) is generally beneficial to Syria's interests, and even more so to Iran's. It is safe to assume that they have not been oblivious to the operational aerial capabilities shown by Israel, and they have no wish to get entangled. One should pay attention to the possibility that a significant increase in Israeli ground operations in Lebanon, for example, as far as the

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tiple purposes: deterrence (against Syria); increased pressure on Hizbollah and the Lebanese government; and readiness for actual deployment if mandated or enabled by the circumstances.

4. Katyusha rockets, and even more so short-range rockets, are a

international parties) allow weapons to be brought in. This emphasizes the future need for control and demilitarization arrangements.

7. Once again we see that the air force and standoff fire are not, in the absence of ground forces, sufficient to "deliver the goods."

Litani River, may place Syria under distress.

There is no doubt that Hizbollah is hit hard, but it is difficult to ascertain if the cumulative IDF action will bring it, or its operatives, to a breaking point. The impression is that IDF activity thus far has failed to yield a critical mass of operations that would lead to a decisive victory on the ground, and one may doubt whether this will happen before significant ground forces have been deployed in Lebanon, considering the well known issues associated with such deployment. Under these circumstances, the IDF is focused on targeting Hizbollah symbols and anything that may undermine the ethos of its military invincibility. Hitting Hizbollah leaders may serve as leverage to declare an end to the war. Ground operations are focused on an attempt to create a sterile strip up to five kilometers wide near the border, in order to foil future infiltration and attempted abductions. This strip is also controlled by Israeli strongholds on the border.

The major issue at this stage of the war is finding the leverage to bring

about its end. In a confrontation where perception is almost as important as reality, there is obviously no Hizbollah knock-out. Nevertheless, and even though this is the lesser of two evils, deploying a significant multinational force together with the Lebanese army on the Lebanon-Israel border, and possibly on the Lebanon-Syria border as well, is a positive regional development as far as Israel is concerned and helps create a new reality. It is most important that such a force be composed of elements from

ment, it is best not to harbor overly high expectations. It is unclear who if anyone will disarm Hizbollah in the area up to the Litani, should the IDF not do so. Past experience has shown that a multinational / international force shies away from armed conflict that may inflict casualties upon it (due to internal pressures in the countries sending their troops), and it is not clear how it will act in such a case.

Hizbollah will continue to exist as an armed organization, and most

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the global powers; that its composition and mandate allow it to “flex its muscles”; that it act to disrupt supply lines from Iran and Syria to Hizbollah; and that Israel be allowed to participate in some way in the supervision of the force.

Yet even if deploying a multinational force in conjunction with the Lebanese army is a positive develop-

likely will continue to attempt infiltration back to southern Lebanon. In preparation for a future confrontation Israel has an obvious interest to create conditions that will increase Hizbollah’s distress in the domestic arena in Lebanon, including, among others, striving for a wider accord with the Lebanese and a resolution of the Shab’a Farms issue.