UNIVERSITY OF READING

STRATEGIC LOGIC AND ABILITY: REVISITING THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

PhD Thesis in Politics

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Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Also, I confirm that I used editing services of Mr Andrew Tarnowska and this did not compromise my authorship and responsibility for this submitted work.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how strategy links operational art, conduct and objectives to the achievement of political aims in war. It develops the concept of “strategic ability” as an analytical framework to assess the ability of states and non-state actors to *perceive*, *institutionalize* and *practice* strategy. While other factors affecting the outcome of war should be considered, political success in the immediate aftermath of war is best explained by having an advantageous ability in strategy making during the war; generating sound grand and military strategies, and guiding the operational capabilities and art to the fulfilment of strategic requirements.

The crux of “strategic logic” is the use of military and non-military means to affect the political will of the enemy by specific ways and scales while keeping the means-ways-ends calculus right. This is invariable but its contextualization varies with the times and within each case. Political-military relations should be organized in ways compatible with political structure and permitting specific functions: information sharing, critical assessment, clear political authorization, the formidable position of the military and strategic intervention of the political leadership. Operational art is not a fixed formula but it should be highly contextual, strategy sensitive and promoting jointness.

This research is based on multiple case studies from the Arab-Israeli wars. It shows that Israel has consistently demonstrated weak strategic ability in regular wars apart from the 1948 War thanks to Ben-Gurion, and more so in irregular wars, which explains the comparatively small political gains it has achieved despite its outstanding battle-space decisiveness. The Arabs, focusing on the Egyptians, suffered from malfunctioning political and social dimensions which prevented their huge human and natural resources from being channelled into operational counter-capabilities or strategic ability. Only in the first stage of the 1973 War and later with the rise of Hezbollah, has the modest improvement in the Arabs’ strategic ability been sufficient to expose Israel’s consistent weakness in strategy making, which has otherwise been concealed by the Arabs’ incompetent performance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Strategy has been known by political leaders and military commanders for centuries. The term originates from the Greek word *Strategos*[1] which is the art of *generalship*. However, strategy only began to be considered as an autonomous concept and discipline in the 18th century. [2]

Strategic studies, as a field of knowledge with multiple ramifications in academia, statecraft and the military profession, have heterogeneous theoretical roots and have developed in varying ways, which means they have lacked a well formed conceptual skeleton in comparison with other disciplines. Strategic studies are interdisciplinary. "To understand the dimensions of strategy, it is necessary to know something about politics, economics, psychology, sociology and geography, as well as technology, force structure and tactics… It is a subject with sharp focus – the role of military power – but no clear parameters".[3]

Methodologically, there is an ongoing dispute on the nature of strategic studies and whether they should be considered primarily a science or an art.[4] Should they imitate the natural sciences in their objective, rigorous and reliable methodology, or be thought of as a discipline with more human and artistic components?

Moreover, the dispute about the methodology of strategic studies has been exacerbated by the different academic backgrounds of strategic thinkers, and their professional biases and perspectives.[5]

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[1] Elinor Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (London: Routledge 2012) p.1.

[2] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy; Thinking War from Antiquity To The Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp.4-6.

[3] John Baylis, James Wirtz, Eliot Cohen and Colin Gray, *Strategy in the Contemporary World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp.4-5.

[4] Colin Gray, *Strategic Studies: A Critical Assessment* (London: Aldwych Press, 1982) pp.128 -133; Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, pp. 4-6.

[5] "Herman Khan was a physicist, Thomas Schelling was an economist, Albert Wholstetter was a mathematician, Henry Kissinger was a historian, and Bernard Brodie was a political scientist", Baylis et al, *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, p.4, in addition to the long chain of soldier scholars not starting by Clausewitz or ending by Rupert Smith.

Without a unified methodology, strategic studies have suffered many discontinuities and contradictions. It is not unusual to find the basic concepts of strategy, its levels of analysis and its essential vocabulary still contested among strategic communities.

J. C. Wylie's description in the 1960s: "Strategy as a subject of study, its intellectual framework is not clearly outlined, and its vocabulary is almost non-existent"[6] still holds good as may often be seen in current debates. They re-question such basic concepts as ''victory"[7], how military means are used for political purposes, why states with military prowess fail to achieve political successes[8], whether there is a conceptual and organisational layer between policy/strategy and tactics, what constitutes the operational level of war[9], whether there is a missing logic of strategy and, if there is, whether it varies between regular wars and irregular or hybrid wars?[10], how this logic is applied institutionally, what degree of political supremacy and involvement is needed to conduct a war[11] and what is needed in practice to formulate and execute strategy?[12]

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[6] J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (Naval Institute Press, 1967) p. 11.

[7] Stephen Biddle, *The Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); William Martel, *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Everette Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (London: Cass, 2005)pp.5-18; Patricia Sullivan, *Who Wins: Predicting Strategic Success and Failure in Armed Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[8] Sullivan, *Who Wins*; Gill Morem, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: a Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Thomas Mahnken, *"Why the Weak Win: Strong Powers, Weak Powers, and the Logic of Strategy"*, in B. Lee and K Walling, *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality* (London: Cass, 2003).

[9] Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (London: Cass, 1997); Justin Kelly and Michael Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy* (US War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 2009); Christopher Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare* (London: Routledge, 2014), and the ongoing debate in *Infinity Journal* led by William Owen (www.infinityjournal.com).

[10] Colin Gray, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt*? (Carlisle, Pennsylvania, US War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006); John Nagl, *Learning To Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya And Vietnam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Williamson Murray and Mansoor, *The Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Christopher Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare (New York: Routledge, 2014)*; Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*.

As strategic studies are a policy-oriented discipline, new practical dilemmas usually provoke conceptual reforms due to a desire among strategic thinkers to come up with new theoretical and practical solutions.

An important question in the literature of strategic studies, especially in the post-Vietnam war era was: Why military supremacy, even victory in battles and campaigns, does not always lead to winning wars by attaining political aims?[13] This question was raised harshly with the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan, as Bradford Lee put it "Why the US wins wars and loses the peace". [14] As Sullivan indicated, between 1945 and 2003 the five permanent members of the UN Security Council failed to achieve their political objectives in 40% of the wars that took place.[15] This opened the door to the essential questions: what is victory in the first instance and how does strategy actually work?

In Israel for instance, the question of the inability of military might to achieve political victory was addressed in the past by strategists such as Michael Handel and Gill Morem.[16] The question was raised again after the 2006 war on Lebanon. As

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[11] Hew Strachan, *Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Mackubin Thomas Owens, *Civil-Military Relations after 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain* (New York: Continuum, 2011); Dale Herspring, *Civil-Military Relations and Shared Responsibility* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 2013).

[12] Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Hew Strachan, *Direction of War.*

[13] Thomas Mahnken*, Why the Weak Win*, p. 60.

[14] Bradford Lee, "Winning Wars but Losing the Peace? The United States and the Strategic Issues of War Termination", *in Strategic Logic and Political Rationality: Essays in Honor of Michael I. Handel (New York: Routledge*, 2013) p. 249.

[15] Patricia Sullivan, *Who Wins: Predicting Strategic Success and Failure in Armed Conflict*, p.4.

[16] Michael Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: the Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security", in Williamson Murray, Knox and Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War*,

Winograd's committee concluded, the war was a sign of "failure", especially at the political and strategic levels.[17]

This study is an applied research in the field of strategic theory using the Arab-Israeli Wars as the research area.

Its primary aim is to provide clarification on how military conduct and objectives are linked to political aims, and how the contribution of military conduct to the political outcome is delineated, in order to answer the primary question: "Why states with military prowess may lose wars politically."

The inquiry as to why mighty military powers, even with irrefutable operational success, lose wars politically leads to the fundamental questions: How winning wars should be defined, and how it can be achieved?

This study introduces two concepts: "strategic logic" and "strategic ability". Strategic logic is how strategy works in theory; the principles and conditions governing the use of military and non-military means, principally the former, to achieve policy ends. It is also about how strategy links policy to operations. The crux of this logic is the use of military and non-military means to affect the political will of the enemy while keeping the means-ways-ends calculus right. Policy has to pass the achievability test, and operational art should reflect the desired strategic and political requirements.

Strategic ability, on the other hand, is a framework of analysis that examines the ability of the state or a non-state actor to perceive and apply strategic logic in war. It has three tiers: conceptual, institutional and practical. The conceptual tier is about the strategy makers having a competent strategic logic, as mentioned above. The institutional tier is about organising the dialogue between military and political

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Gil Merom, "The Architecture and Soft Spots of Israeli Grand Strategy", in *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality,* p. 215.

[17] Official English Summary of the Winograd Report (Press Release) https://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/winogradreport-04302007.pdf, 2007.

leaderships to fulfil the requirements of strategy making. The practical tier is about generating sound grand and military strategies and guiding the operational art and capabilities along the strategic pathway.

The main proposition here is that, putting all other variables aside, advantageous practical strategic ability should lead to an advantageous war outcome. A state's failure to win a war in its immediate aftermath is due to weak strategic ability, whether or not military victory is achieved.

Another proposition is that conceptual and institutional abilities should lead to a comparable ability in carrying out strategy (practical tier), unless other factors like personal aberration, changes in the political context or enemy actions intervene.

By elaborating the elements of strategic logic in war and how it is put into practice by strategic ability - which includes moulding the operational art to suit the strategic requirements - this study aspires to show how strategy actually works in theory and practice in order to win wars.

To achieve this target, classical and modern strategic literature was examined in two areas.

The first is how winning a war is defined. After exploring the strengths and weaknesses of different trends in defining the war outcome, the study chooses and explains its adopted model.

The second area is how wars are won or lost, especially if the political outcome is not synchronised with the military achievements. After discussing the competing explanations, this chapter elaborates the main theory of strategic ability. This holds that advantageous strategic ability is the main determinant of the outcome, and methodology, structure and originality follow from it.

How Winning War Is Defined

As many theorists have indicated recently, strategic thinking has lacked a convincing theory of victory and precise language to define it.[18] The classic definition of victory has been understood in a purely military sense and shifted from territorial gains in antiquity to annihilation of the opponent on the battlefield in the industrial age.[19] Political scientists, on the other hand, focused on investigating the causes of war and neglected the examination of its outcomes.[20]

This changed to some extent in the past two decades with research which addressed the outcome of wars. Some of these studies criticized the traditional understanding of victory and showed its incompatibility to the results of recent conflicts.[21] Others offered an alternative concept, more differentiation or a detailed analytical framework.[22] Lastly, some scholars highlighted specific elements in examining the theory of victory such as a just peace[23], and the perception of victory.[24] A concise survey of these studies will be made before offering our chosen model.

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[18] Colin Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2002); Martel, William, *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Everette Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (London: Cass, 2005).

[19] Martel, *Victory in War, pp.15-51.*

[20] Alan C. Stem III, *Win, Lose, or Draw: Domestic Politics and the Crucible of War* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), p.1.

[21] Robert Mandel*, The Meaning of Military Victory* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006); Christopher Dandeker, “From Victory to Success: The Changing Mission of Western Armed Forces”, in Jan Angstrom and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, *Modern War and the Utility of Force: Challenges, Methods and Strategy* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010).

[22] Mandel, *The Meaning of Victory*; William Martel, *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory*.

[23] Beatrice Heuser, “The Neglected Trinity: Victory, Peace and Justice”, *Joint Force Quarterly,* ***Vol 69,*** *April* (Washington DC: NDU Press, 2013).

[24] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Brian Bond's historical study on the Pursuit of Decisive Victory did not offer an alternative theory of victory, but made a clear demarcation between decisive victory on battlefield and translating military gains into advantageous and stable peace. The real aim of his study was to provide evidence that victory, and war in general, has been an effective political instrument, and to legitimize retrospectively the "soundness" of western political and strategic choices in the grand military shows, especially the two World Wars.[25]

However, Bond offered more critical insights on how elusive the achievement of both political and military victories had been over the previous two centuries. Militarily, the Napoleonic model of victory was a landmark in its decisiveness and totality, which was then thought to be a thing of the past until its regeneration by the Prussian campaigns of 1866-71. After the debacle of WW1, the Napoleonic model became viable again thanks to developments in technology, doctrine and ruthless leadership, as in the Blitzkrieg. This was followed by fears of nuclear Armageddon during the Cold War and by Israel's military triumphs in 1967 and 1973. The model also made a transient reappearance in the Gulf War of 1991.[26]

William Martel produced a "pre-theory of victory" organising principles rather than formidable causal links. After surveying how classical and modern strategists perceived victory, he introduced his pre-theory by looking at four areas: The first, which is our interest here, examined the levels of victory. He counted three levels: tactical, politico-military and grand strategic. Tactical victory is winning battles and campaigns militarily. Politico-military victory "covers everything from conquering territories and defeating armies to successes in limited wars. In analytic terms, this level encompasses the range of political and military outcomes that occur when force is used to defeat the adversary's military forces and when that defeat compels changes in its political behaviour or policy". Strategic victory is "when the state imposes strategic change by destroying the ideological and moral values of a society and then re-establishing the foundations of the enemy state”.[27]

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[25] Brian Bond, *The Pursuit of Victory: from Napoleon to Saddam Hussein* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp.198-201.

[26] Bond, *The Pursuit of Victory*, pp.198-201.

Clearly, Martel means by “strategic victory” deciding a war with total aims and “politico-military victory” as success in limited wars. However, describing them as different levels of victory risks “mixing theory of strategy with theory of victory”. Indeed, the strategic question concerns the selection of the type of war to be waged, with total or limited aims, and the specific aims to be achieved, rather than how victory should be categorized.

This problem was resolved by Colin Gray’s framework of tactical (winning battles and campaigns), strategic (achieving the policy ends), and political-grand strategic victory by which the political scene is permanently transformed to prevent further conflict. However, the latter can be achieved by compulsion and persuasion in either limited or total wars.[28]

In a more specific but limited perspective, Robert Mandel dismissed two approaches to defining victory: identification of a desired end status before the start of the war, and costs-gains calculus. He argued that the former suffers from ambiguity, as it is usually endorsed in very general terms, and also from potential fluctuation, as many wars end with the belligerents’ aims far different from those at the beginning, and may turn out to be inappropriate to the national interest.[29]

Mandel also said that “attaining a fluid positive cost-benefit ratio - rather than fixed end-state identification, to gauge victory” could have contradictory elements. He then introduced his model of strategic victory as the achievement of detailed measures of success in six dimensions: informational, military, political, economic, social, and diplomatic.[30]

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[27] Martel, *Victory in War, pp.15-51.*

[28] Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory,* pp.96-98.

[29] Mandel, *The Meaning of Victory*, pp.5-7.

[30] Mandel, *The Meaning of Victory*, pp.39-49.

Two weaknesses can be identified in this approach: as a fixed and detailed formula for specific military interventions leading to regime change and state building, it lacks the potential for analysis of other war situations and ends. It also combines means and ends in a single category, which may lead to dogmatism and losing sight of policy ends.

The same method was advocated by Rupert Smith to suit "war among people" which is characterized by open ends, timeless duration, and tasks not aiming to subdue the enemy decisively on the battlefield but to produce stability, maintain security and good governance as well as counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. Dandeker described this as pursuing "conditions" rather than "success".[31] Admittedly, there are some aspects of recent military interventions which do not fit the terms victory or success, or even the war model, as will be discussed later, but other aspects of counter-insurgency and regular warfare do.

Dandeker also emphasised that the conditions suggested to be aimed for become an end in themselves, replacing or hindering the achievement or revision of overall policy aims for the campaign.[32]

Two further aspects of the theory of victory need to be addressed: perception and just peace.

Johnson and Tierney pointed to the tension between military victory on the ground (score-keeping) and the perception of political elites and people of winning and losing wars (match-fixing). For score-keeping, "observers need a metric for what constitutes success and failure. A metric is the criterion against which to measure an outcome, and comprises two parts: a yardstick of what to measure (eg: territory or body counts); and a threshold on the yardstick to mark the point when success in considered to be achieved (e.g. strategic target captured or an enemy army destroyed)." But observers also need reliable information to reach an assessment.

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[31] Dandeker, *From Victory to Success*, pp.21-23.

[32] Dandeker, *From Victory to Success*, pp.23-24.

Johnson and Tierney counted five types of material gains that compose the concept of victory: absolute gains, relative gains vis-à-vis the enemy, achieving core aims which we may consider strategic gains, the price of peace that should be paid as post-conflict commitment and optimal policy (they mix policy with strategy here but they mean the best course of action compared to other options).[33]

In match-fixing, assessment of the material gains of victory is distorted by a mind-set (expectations, historical experience, culture…) predating the war and affecting how its conduct and outcome are assessed. Also, observers may react to salient events in ways that inflate or deflate their weight in assessing the outcome. Finally, perceptions of war outcome are frequently manipulated by media, leaders or social pressure.[34]

"Failing to win" showed efficiently how perceptions may distort the reality of war outcomes. However, the complexity of assessing outcomes was not only related to variable perceptions, but to the nature of war outcome itself. This is usually a mixture of gains and losses; the strategic effects are not only primary but can be secondary or tertiary as chain reactions; and the hybridity of some wars with different measures of success for each component can also affect perceptions of outcome.

Johnson and Tierney also de-prioritized the achievement of the policy aims of war by including it in the list of gains, which also featured tactical and operational gains. This risks losing insight on what is the most important and the difference between means and ends.

Moreover, assuming there is a difference between perception and material gains, in which the latter are more related to "real" success in war, overlooked strategic logic. Using military and non-military means to achieve political ends is achieved by modifying the will of the enemy, as will be discussed, to affect its perception of the costs/gains calculus and the probability of victory. So, when the authors examined the 1973 Arab-Israeli war for instance, they underplayed the psychological effect of the Egyptian war-effort or even considered it as alien to the "real gain/losses", although its effect as demolishing the Israeli theory and sense of security was exactly what the Egyptians were attempting to achieve, as Chapter 4 elaborates. More obviously, in irregular wars, the strategic effect sought by irregular movements is to affect the perceptions of the political elites and the population (both in the front and at home) which is not achieved by a clear military victory on the battlefields but rather by a sophisticated strategy of draining resources while avoiding decisive confrontations.

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[33] Johnson and Tierney, *Failing to Win*, pp. 22-26.

[34] Johnson and Tierney, *Failing to Win*, pp.49-76.

Heuser persuasively criticized the neglect of modern military theory and practice of the importance of achieving a "just peace" as a war end, and the obsession with achieving decisive military victory and "imposing one's will upon the enemy". She attributed this to some extent to the predominance of the Napoleonic-Clausewitzian cast.[35]

From the strategic point of view, however, the role of strategy in the process of formulating policy ends is dependent on achievability. Policy is formulated through a complex environment in which all political, social, cultural, personal and geographical factors come into play. Heuser indirectly accepted the difference in the level of analysis between policy and strategy when she quoted Martel's distinction between the theory of "victory and the outcome of the employment of force through strategy". The purpose of strategic thinking, whether in a military sense or in the context of short-term grand strategy, is not to inform policy-making of political aims and define a peaceful conclusion, nor to expound a theory of world order to be adopted, but it can show if the chosen political aims are achievable or not. Long-term grand strategy, however, attempts to find compatibility between the political aims of a specific war and long-term policy ends, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[35] Heuser, "The Neglected Trinity", pp. 6-12.

The term " just peace" – raising the question what is the legacy of war and how possible is it to achieve a just peace -- evokes deep philosophical rivalries between the realist and Hobbesian trend on the one hand, and the more idealistic trend of Kant or a relativist approach.[36] The merit of Heuser's criticism, even when considering the strategic level of analysis, was that most strategists in the Western world, as the authors of Strategy in the Contemporary World put it, "belong to the same intellectual tradition". They are Realists with a Hobbesian pessimistic view of human nature and the eternity of war and conflict. "Realists see a limited role for reason, law, morality and institution in world politics" as the international system is without an "effective government".[37] Even this presumed world government may solve problems in legality but can it resolve what law philosophers see as the difference between legality and justice.

As R. Sinnreich, concludes in "The Making of Peace", the disputes among political scientists and historians on the plausibility and historical evidence supporting the three theories of peace making: world government, reaching equilibrium, and enhancing democratization are too great to be resolved.[38]

At the level of grand strategy, however, the problem of a peaceful/just end arises as it is closer to policy level. Many strategists have advocated the aim of advantageous peace, in which many of the political aims achieved are accepted in order to keep the seeds of the next war as far away as possible. But does achieving "advantageous" peace means leaving "just" peace behind?

Hence, it may be worth acknowledging a peaceful settlement of war which is viable for long time as a grand strategic success, while keeping in mind that the definition of peace is very debatable: is it a complete end of conflict or just an interlude between wars due to a perception that one generation shouldn't fight the same enemy twice.[39] However, the concept of a "just" peace is too complex and relative to be addressed in acceptable objectivity.

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[36] Michael Howard, "Preface: Concluding Peace" in Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey (eds), *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[37] Baylis et al, *Strategy in the Contemporary World,* pp.4-6.

[38] Richard Sinnreich, "Conclusions: History and the Making of peace" in Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey (eds), *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009*) pp: 360-366.

Many authors have criticised Clausewitz for advocating decisive military victory through a battle of annihilation as the ideal war end.[40] This criticism, however, was offset by other scholars who pointed to the complexity; dialectical approach and different level of analysis of "On War", which all make the old theorist's ideas open to contested interpretations.[41]

Clausewitz appraised the peaceful ending of conflict from a purely strategic point of view, but of course what he meant was an advantageous peace. He said absolute war was a "war on paper" but real war, as the history of war shows, is manipulated and its extreme form is altered by policy.[42] Moreover, Clausewitz even considered "victory" a tactical or operational term at best in the modern sense to describe decisive success on the battlefield or in a series of battles. "In tactics the means are the fighting forces -- the end is victory." "The original means of strategy is victory -- that is, tactical success; its ends are those arrangements that lead to peace".[43]

The Chosen Model:

This thesis adopts Gray's model in defining war outcome, but with an important modification. Rather than using the term "victory", with its tactical and absolute sense, I propose the use of success at the strategic level. Grand strategy in war aims at using military and non-military means to achieve political aims and to provide the requirements for what policy adopts as longstanding peace and its major theorem.

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[39] Sinnreich, "Conclusions", pp.356-360.

[40] A long chain of critics including Liddel Hart, William Martel, Hew Strachan and Beatrice Heuser.

[41] This was a main theme in Michael Handel's *Masters of War* and was reiterated by Clausewitz's advocates such as Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010*); Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas* (London: Palgrave 2005) and persuasively by Jehuda Wallach, *The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation: The Theories of Clausewitz and Schliffen and Their Impact on the German Conduct of Two World Wars* (London: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp.16-18.

[42] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989) pp. 80-88 and 579-581.

[43] Clausewitz, *On War,* p. 143.

Military strategy on a lower level orchestrates military conduct and outcomes to fulfil the requirements of grand strategic success.

The making of peace and consolidating the political conclusions of war is far beyond its frontiers, although it should be envisaged when making grand and military strategies.

In addition, a big component of peace-making is dealing with the problems the war caused, which were hard to predict because of the chain reaction of events.[44] Many of the effects or requirements on the social, geostrategic, political and economic spheres can either complicate or facilitate the achievement of policy aims or of making peace in the long term.

“Strategic success” in war then should be defined as achieving the political aims confined to the frontiers of war and its direct aftermath, and providing the military and non-military requirements for achieving long-term policy aims. “Strategic advantage” means the achievement of more policy aims or their requirements vis-à-vis the opponent. In cases in which stalemate occurs, other factors such as costs or post-war end status (territorial gains, improved diplomatic position, recovery of power, and the long-term grand strategic outcome -- although these may not be exclusively linked the post war situation) are to be considered “relative superiority”.

Complexities in identifying political aims

As Mandel indicated, some methodological and practical problems appear when winning in war is defined by achieving pre-formulated political aims.

Firstly, the researcher may find contested lists and different expressions of the political aims of the state going into a specific war. It is not unusual even to find ongoing institutional conflicts within the state on the nature and scale of political aims before, during or after the war. These “contested” political aims, and strategies, can be due either to individual, corporate or inter-service rivalry or to domestic politics interests.[45] Which list, then, should be adopted to estimate the outcome of war?

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[44] Murray, “Introduction: searching for peace”, p.22.

The selected list of political aims should be the one which is endorsed for strategic/military planning at the political level, although the richness of policy formation will be tackled in this study. Generally, if the political aims of war are not clearly elaborated or not agreed upon, due to abnormal civil-military relations for example, this is a negative sign of strategic ability.

Secondly, political aims may be modified during a war. Many states, for example the belligerents during World War I, entered the war with political aims which were totally different from their political aims in the middle or at the end stage of the war. Again, which political aims should be considered in our analysis in order to judge the meaning to them of “winning”?

My research technique for dealing with this problem is to analyse qualitatively the “strategic” logic behind the alteration of political aims. Strategy is a link between political aims and operational capability which is not static but is shaped by events, the opponent’s capability and his measures to resist. If, for example, the capability is found to fall short of achieving the strategic effect needed, the political aims are then reasonably modifiable, or as Clausewitz indicated, “That however does not imply that the political aim is a tyrant. It must adapt itself to its chosen means, a process which radically changes it; yet the political aim remains the first consideration.”[46] However, if modifying the political aims here resulted from inaccurate strategic estimate, it is a sign of incompetence and the original political aims are still considered.

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[45] Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy,* pp. 488-499.

[46] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 87.

Thirdly, which may be a variant of the second problem; political aims are formulated to implement a new vision of the role of the belligerent country or a new theory of peace. How might political aims and their achievement be considered if the state, or its ruling agent, modifies the vision of its role and, in turn, changes the political aims of the war? Again, if changing the vision of the role is due to inaccurate strategic calculations, this is considered a red flag in assessing strategic ability. But, if modifying the vision of the role is non-strategic and due to political or cultural changes when, for example, another domestic player with different views comes to power, the new vision of the role, with its new policy, should be adopted for analysis.

How Wars Are Lost or Won?

Researchers of "power theory" have been divided in their attempts to explain why some states have been political winners and others were not. The first group highlighted the resources of power, whether material (economic, human, weaponry, technology)[47] or moral (resort and morale,[48] political stability, social cohesion and know-how). Others who looked only at the manifestations of power were tautological as they simply recognized the victorious states as the more powerful.[49] As Mahnken explained, both ignored the area in which capabilities are recognized, organized and used intelligently to achieve an advantageous position. This area of action is what this study understands as strategy.[50]

Inability to Achieve Military Victory

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[47] Jacek Kugler and William Domke, "Comparing the Strength of Nations", *Comparative Political Studies*: April 1986, **19**) pp. 39-69.

[48] A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler*, The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Allan Stam III, *Win, Lose or Draw: Domestic Politics and the Crucible of War* (Michigan: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[49] Ashley J. Tellis, Janice Bially, Christopher Layne, Melissa McPherson, *Measuring National Power in The Post-Industrial Age* (RAND Army Research Division, January 1, 2000).

[50] Thomas Mahnken, "Why Weak Win: strong powers, weak powers and the logic of strategy", *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality* (London: Cass, 2003) p. 60.

At the level of military conduct, Stephen Biddle described how military researchers made a causal link between the capabilities, usually material, of the contestants, and winning battles. This link ignored the most important factor, in which the capabilities are manipulated to produce an effect, in other words, force employment in the light of the modern system of combat.[51]

Biddle's scope of research does not specifically answer the question as his arrival point is military not political victory, as indicated in the title "Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle" and his three case studies and operational research methodology. What he proposed was composition of a modern war system at a tactical (offensive and defensive) and operational level (breakthrough and exploitation, or limited aims approaches in the offensive, and depth, reserve and counterattack in the defensive) which assumedly would suffice to win battles and campaigns.[52]

His answer was part of the conceptual problem within the discipline as he discredited policy and strategy as factors to be addressed on their own in order to explain winning and losing campaigns; hence he omitted studying them from his research methodology.[53]

He overlooked three points: firstly, victories in battles and campaigns do not lead straightforwardly to winning the wars politically, as the main question of this study highlights. Second, it is strategy that fosters, shapes, and manipulates military capabilities and utility to follow "the modern system of war" in a complex and dynamic environment. Thirdly, is this modern system of war, which we may also call operational art, a fixed formula to be applied in all contexts and missions, or is it very flexible, as the next chapter elaborates, and should analysis of it be sensitive to the contextual and strategic parameters?[54]

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[51] Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) pp.14-27.

[52] Biddle, *Military Power*, pp.28-51.

[53] "Grand strategy and military strategy, organisational adaptability, administrative skills, or politico-military coordination are all clearly important. Operations and tactics, however, are more proximate to realize capability – many of the effects of grand strategy or institutional structure can best be understood via their effects on preponderance, technology, and operational/tactical force employment," Biddle, *Military Power*, p. 26.

Regarding our focused inquiry on the inability to achieve political winning in spite of military prowess, strategists offered some theoretical explanations or practical remedies. Although practitioners' remedies may look very pragmatic, they are based on some forms of theoretical assumptions at least.

Poor Diplomacy

The straightforward response of military institutions to the question why a political victory does not inevitably follow a military one was "we brought the victory on the battlefield but the politicians did not achieve the advantageous peace".[55] This belief may be supported by claims of poor diplomatic techniques, or of not addressing the concerns of the defeated, or anomalies in the political leaders' personalities and their institutions. The limitation of this explanation is that the scale and type of military outcome, even the very nature of military operations, affects the peace that follows, as explained by Clausewitz.[56] Ignoring the fact that military practice is to a considerable extent responsible for the political outcome and should for this reason be subservient to policy is a sign of misconceiving the nature of strategy.

As Geoffrey Blainey indicated "War is a dispute about measurement"[57], which is a measurement of power and resolve, so war is concluded when this dispute is resolved. As Sinnreich commented, it is more complex than this, as there is fear, honour and all the drama of "religious fervour, tribal or ethnic identity and historical grudges" behind the will to fight. The will change, as discussed later, is the strategic effect any grand strategy should aim to achieve on short term, and military strategy.

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[54] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, pp.109-126.

[55] Lee, "Winning the War but Losing the Peace: the United States and Strategic Issue of War Termination", pp. 249-253.

[56] Clausewitz, *On War,* p.92.

[57] Sinnreich, "*Conclusions*" in Murray and Lacey (eds), *The Making of Peace,* p.356.

Grand strategy uses both military and diplomatic methods interdependently to achieve the will change required for political conclusion and to pave the way for long-term handling of the conflict. Failed diplomacy is no doubt a legitimate reason for political failure, and it is still a sign of grand strategic weakness, but it cannot explain all cases. Especially, as the First World War indicates,[58] the inability of military outcome, its scope and nature, to resolve the dispute of "power and resolve measurement" was undeniable and a major factor in "the failure of Versailles".

Defective Termination of War

The second explanation acknowledges the nature of strategy and the interdependence between military, diplomatic and other means under political guidance. However, it considers that the problem lies at the final stage of war, termination. The main advocate for this explanation was Michael Handel.[59] The limitation to this explanation is that many wars were fought using a faulty strategy from the very beginning. This explanation ignores Clausewitz's core advice that the primary task of a strategist is to know which kind of war he is going to fight.[60]

Operational Defocusing

Military institutions have become progressively more concerned after recent wars with the elusiveness of political aims. Some western doctrines acknowledge the problem and have coined the concept of "effect based operations" or similar ideas.[61] This approach not only illuminates the crux of strategy, which is using the military and non-military means to achieve some strategic/political effect, but it put the strategic duties on the shoulders of the operational cadre. Also, its predilection for reducing complex strategic performance to algebraic formulas and a technological panacea is hazardous and endangers the essence of strategy as an art in which many variables cannot be measured quantitatively, the game is two-sided and interactive, and chance and frictions are at work.[62]

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[58] Williamson Murray, "Versailles: the Peace Without a Chance" in Murray and Lacey (eds), *The Making of Peace,* p.237.

[59] Michael Handel, "The Study of War Termination", *Journal of Strategic Studies* (**Vol. 1, No. 1, 1978**) pp. 51-75. Also Bradford Lee, "Winning the War but Losing the Peace: the United States and Strategic Issue of War Termination", pp.249-270

[60] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.88.

[61] Milan Vigo, "Effect Based Operations: A Critique", *Joint Force Quarterly*, issue **41**, April 2006.

The Existence of Operational Level of War

A new approach, opposing the previous one, and supported by new technological developments and sensor warfare, claimed that the lack of strategic decisiveness is caused by the existence of the operational level itself. New technological developments enable political leaders to be instantly close to the tactical discourse and, on the other hand, the operational level undermines the ability of military leaders to identify and pursue political aims for the sake of chasing a military victory.[63] Within this approach, the existence of an operational level is the main obstacle to linking military conduct with political aims.

Actually, the operational level of war is not only an organisational necessity, as was seen during the Napoleonic era due to the massive expansion in the size and missions of armies, but is also related to the character of modern war itself, as this study holds. Collecting and harmonizing the discrete tactical engagements, in time and space, is essential to achieving a purposeful and formidable military outcome which can serve the political aim in the process of strategy.[64]

The real problem is not the existence of the levels of war but seeing these levels in a segmental rather than a diffusional pattern. Lower levels of strategy are purely operational, and higher levels, as Clausewitz said, are purely political. Colin Gray advocates for cancelling the operational level and emphasising the operational art as a midway solution.[65] Although this preserves the role of operational thinking, it does not accommodate the institutional and democratic necessities of having a formidable military institution and its compatibility with healthy civil-military relations. In these relations, the professionalism of the military institution should be invested in, and a separation sought between political and military levels for democratic practice, with civilian supremacy remaining the norm for strategic reasons as well.[66]

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[62] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, pp.36-38.

63 Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, September 30,2009.

[64] Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: the Evolution of Operational Theory,* (The Cummings Centre for Russian and East European Studies, London: Frank Cass, 2004).

Wars Being Asymmetrical

Others have claimed the emergence of asymmetric war as a reason why militarily powerful states lose wars. These states lose wars because they engage in asymmetric conflicts in which military advances aggravate the irregular movement to strengthen public support for it and its ability to inflict harm, which in turn catalyses economic, political, moral and social losses in the home country.[67] However, this explanation does not account for the inability to claim political achievement in symmetric conflicts. Why Germany in the First and Second World Wars, Israel in the 1956 and 1967 wars, and the US in the regular part of the Vietnam War did not achieve their desired political ends. In these wars, the stunning, if not decisive, operational superiority could not be leveraged to build up a strategic success manifested by the attainment of the political aims of each war. Despite the different presumed causes of this failure to achieve political aims in each case, it is more related to poor strategy than anything else.

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[65] Gray, *Strategy Bridge,* p.20.

[66] From the classic debate between Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and State: Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1982) and Ian Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: a Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). Both agreed on professionalism, separation and civilian supremacy and differed upon the degree of civilian control and involvement.

[67] Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

The problem of disparity between military prowess and political outcome has also been addressed by political researchers. Herek *et al.* were convinced by the general idea that vigilant strategy-making leads to bad political outcomes, although their quantitative methods confirmed the correlation between both but not necessarily a causal link.[68] Good strategic decision-making is based on meticulous information collection and review, comprehensive considerations of the alternatives, and contingency planning and implementation.[69] Interestingly, these researchers have indicated that other variables at work during conflicts result in the lack of proper causation, not only the adversary's actions and responses but the general level of awareness of strategic ideas and consequences.[70]

Defective Strategy Making Process

Focusing on strategy-making in wars, Riza Brooks considered competent strategic assessment resulting from proper civil-military relations as the cornerstone in explaining victory or defeat. But she added: "good strategic assessment does not render a state infallible. It just lessens its chances of making large strategic errors".[71] As with the examples above, Brooks's theory did not include other variables in defining strategic assessment as the grip on sound strategic concepts and logic; neither did it address the other components of strategy making, implementation and reviewing.

Comprehensive Formulas

Patricia Sullivan came up with a highly organised theory to interpret the winning and losing of war. She rightly indicated the problem of defining victory and adopted the term strategic victory which was defined as achieving the political aims. She also effectively discredited the material explanation and moral/resort explanations. Sullivan's study was a great step forward and is closely related to this study's topic and requires a deeper discussion here.

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[68] Georgy Herek, Irving L. Janis and Paul Huth, "Decision Making During International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome?" in .*Journal of Conflict Resolution,* vol. **31,** *no. 2,* June 1987, pp. *203-226.*

[69] Risa Brooks, *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[70] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, pp. 5-12.

[71] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy,* p.10.

She proposed four variables: military capabilities, resort/cost-tolerance, military strategy and war aims, stating that a complex relationship between them will lead to winning. She argued that states with high military capabilities will win if they choose "denial" war aims such as seizing or defending territory, removing regimes or defending the sovereignty, and used "destructive brute force" strategy that seeks battlefield decisions. Actors with low capability would win if they chose coercive war aims, a change in adversary policy, for example, and used a "punishment" strategy. We should not see wars, she claims, when the actor's perception of capability and cost tolerance is obviously lower or higher than the opponent's.[72]

On the negative side, the theory she introduced was determinist, a fixed prescription underplaying the dynamic and reactive nature of war; rationalizing, overlooking the individual, social and cultural differences, all of which was contradicted by reality.

A further criticism may be made of her rejection of the strategic explanation. Unfortunately, she misconceived the meaning of "strategy" as being merely an operational strategy or plan at best, as when she defined Biddle's "modern system of warfare" as a "strategy". She did not even differentiate between operational theory and its viable and dynamic contextualization in operational strategy and plans. She could not see that her advocacy of matching capabilities, methods and war aims is the crux of strategy rather than anything else.

Also, one of her determinist propositions, that an actor with high military capability and enough cost tolerance would win militarily and politically only if he chooses a "destructive" war aim, is not a universal law. Operational capabilities need strategic guidance at a more complex level than choosing between punishment or denial strategies in order to gain a political victory or, even as the 1948 Arab-Israeli war shows, operational victory. Interestingly, both insurgencies and counter-insurgency were placed in this category and the model's advice for the latter is to use brute force in a denial strategy (battlefield decision) in order to prevail.

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[72] Sullivan, *Who Wins*, pp. 46-57.

All previous approaches diagnosed the problem as the inability to achieve political aims in spite of an outstanding military capability, but analysed it from a limited scope. Other explanations for losing wars were also offered. Wars might demonstrate disparities in resources, operational capability, low morale, poor leadership or dysfunctional civil-military relationships; all these explanations are piecemeal. Each can work in some but not all cases; they have a limited interpretive power.

Is it feasible then to develop a wider explanation with greater interpretive power which can incorporate other theories by setting a framework of analysis and internal regulatory and conditioning factors? Can a general theory of "strategic ability", the ability to link military conduct to political aims, or their requirements in the short aftermath of war, accommodate other working theories?

Are there any relevant inputs to address the question of why wars are lost in spite of military supremacy? Does the type of war, being regular or irregular, make any difference in our theory? This thesis aims to deal with these inquiries.

The essence of strategy in war is linking the military practice/outcome, primarily in the time scope of war, to the political effect/aims. If this link is chaotic, unhealthy or not productive, this is a strategic problem more than anything else. The remedy of this problem is to understand how strategy works (strategic logic), and to transform this logic into practice (strategic ability). Both, however, are shaped by conditioning elements in strategic dimensions. These theoretical frameworks will be explored before moving to the main argument and methodology of this thesis.

Theory of "Strategic Ability"

The strategic ability of a state or non-state actor is its ability to perceive the logic of strategy conceptually; to have an institutional capacity to maintain a functioning bridge between military and political levels; and to apply the strategic logic practically by choosing sound strategies and by guiding the operational art and capability strategically.

The Conceptual Tier

The first layer is the conceptual which is the leaders' and ruling institutions' acquisition of a proper theory of war and strategy.

There are three levels of strategic theory. The general theory deals with the phenomenon of war and how military force and other means, in general, are used to achieve policy ends. The basic assumptions on this level form the enduring skeleton of strategic logic.

The elements of strategic logic will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter on theory. To proceed with the methodological articulation, they will be mentioned here briefly.

Strategic logic is composed of some conditions and organizing principles that are essential to understanding how strategy works and how strategic thinking is linked to both policy formulation and operational art and conduct.

Strategic logic is using military – and non-military – means to affect the will of the enemy. The grade and nature of will change, whether it needs to be destroyed or modified, is related to the type of war, with total or limited aims respectively. The strategic effect, as a currency for will change, is achieved by attacking the centre of gravity, or affecting the enemy's mindset (calculation, feeling of security and probability of winning).

Operational art is not a fixed formula but a dynamic consideration of the best way the military means are used to achieve military objectives. It is a continuous modulation of the army's mind depending on many variables: technology and capabilities, lessons distilled from history and recent experience, geographical, cultural and administrative factors affecting both sides. But most importantly, it should reflect the strategic requirements and the type of war.

Strategic logic, in its abstract form, should the same for all types of wars. However, its contextualization varies according to the age, type of war, and specific strategic context.

The second level of theory is contextualizing the general strategic theory to the period of time: time-related strategic theory, which recognizes the effects of time-related technological change (introducing new military means such as airpower or nuclear or even minor changes) and socio-political implications (such as democratization or politicising the conflict seen in irregular wars) on the ways of doing strategy. As Clausewitz indicated, "every age has its own kind of war."[73]

The third level of theory may be more related to practicing strategy rather than perceiving it. Strategic theory is further contextualized for a specific war and the idea of how this particular war should be fought and won. This level of theory is not merely the formulation of strategy in a planning/programming process; in fact it precedes and rules it. It is what Clausewitz meant when stating that the primary task of a commander is to know the war he is going to fight.[74] Gray has named it the "story arc" which is the "theory of victory" in a specific war.[75]

As a conceptual value, the theoretical level of strategic ability is hard to measure. However, some indicators for it can be drawn from the educational backgrounds and systems of leaders and commanders, and content analysis of speeches, internal discussions, writings and explicit elaborations.

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[73] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.593.

[74] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.88.

[75] Gray, *Strategy Bridge, pp.172-178.*

Another complexity in researching how strategy makers perceived the basic strategic logic is not identical to what they articulate publicly or privately due to the possibility that they might merely be justifying decisions or past performance.[76]

With or without the exposure to specific strategic theory, if this inference can be found empirically, strategy makers perceive strategy in a theoretical model (assumptions), and the role of research is to delineate this model first and then to compare it with the strategic logic. The elements of strategic logic discussed next chapter are summarized in table 1.

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[76] Geoffrey Sloan identified the problem of whether politicians and strategists were truly convinced by the theories they were exposed to, or whether they were using them to legitimize their choices. Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Geopolitical Strategic Policy, 1890 to 1987* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988) pp. vii-viii.

Elements of Strategic Logic

- War is a *duel* where military means are used for policy ends
- Strategy attempts to keep *means – ways – ends* in harmony
- Strategy works by affecting the *enemy will* to accept the required end state
- In *War with total aims:* the will of enemy is destroyed by attacking COG which is contextual
- In *War with limited aims:* the will is modified by affecting the enemy's calculation and security
- *Military objectives* are variable and decided by strategy in each war
- *Levels of war* are hierarchical but fusional
- *Operational level* of war is a modern age requirement
- *Operational art* is not a fixed formula but its contextual and should be strategy sensitive
- Strategic logic is *invariable* but its contextualization in age and specific case varies

Table 1

The Institutional Tier

This can be studied through two approaches with different foci, functional or relational, to borrow Peter Feaver's terminology.[77]

The relational approach is a political one which is interested in the way civil-military relations and structures are organised in relation to the type of regime, and in their implications for democratic integrity and civilian control. In this approach, which has been predominant in political sciences, as Suzanne Nielson has indicated, the primary focus is assessing the level of civilian control rather than military effectiveness.[78] Nielson herself was more focused on the parameters of military effectiveness, which were mainly tactical and operational, rather than the more challenging impact of these relations which means managing the war strategically.

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[77] Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) p.61.

Three relational patterns have been identified and their advocates linked them to better strategic outcomes.

The first is the Huntingtonian model of political supremacy and "objective" control. In this pattern, the politicians decide on the policy aims of war and control the management of defence, but leave wide autonomy for the military to achieve these aims.[79] Hence the strategy bridge was mostly broken, as in the case of US strategy in recent decades according to some critics.[80]

The second pattern is what Janwitz advocated only one year after Huntington's textbook. He argues that with the modern nature of war and conflict, military means should be used under meticulous and closely supervised civilian control, [81] which Huntington earlier called "subjective" control. Eliot Cohen advocated this approach too in his "Supreme Command".[82] Supporting this point, one needs look not only at low intensity or asymmetric war scenarios, but even at a classic war like 1973; both sides were attracted to following the finest developments on the battlefield when the Israeli breakthrough to the west of Suez occurred, as they deeply affected how each side would have to negotiate after the impending cease-fire.

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[78] Susanne Nielson, "Civil Military Relations Theory and Military Effectiveness", *Public Administration and Management,* Volume **10**, Number 2, pp.61-84.

[79] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations (Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press, 1957).*

[80] Bradford Lee, "Winning War but Losing Peace? The United States and the Strategic Issues of War Termination" in *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality* and Mackubin Thomas Owen, *US Civil-Military Relations after 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil-Military Bargain (New York, Continuum Press, 2011)*.

[81] Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait (New York: Free Press, 1964)*.

[82] Eliot A. Cohen*, Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Free Press, Kindle Edition, 2012).

A similar theoretical rivalry was documented within Russian analysis earlier in the 1920s between Svechin and Tukhachevisky, when the former emphasised the concept of absolute political supremacy over military conduct, while the latter only attributed defining the policy goals to the political level and insisted that the military be provided with autonomy in their actions.[83]

A third pattern had one advocate recently, Hew Strachan, who was very critical of the political encroachment over the military area of expertise during the 2003 War in Iraq and thereafter. He advocated a pattern of political-military partnership in which the military command should form an acknowledged part of the strategy-making process.[84] Interestingly, this pattern was used by Yoram Peri and Ben Meir,[85] but in a critical sense, to describe the Israeli civil-military relations.[86]

The functional approach assesses the ability of the institutional structures and norms to facilitate specific functions needed for better strategy-making. In this approach, as Colin Gray indicated, the strategist's bridging functions as theoretical planner, commander and politician or diplomat should be performed regardless of who does what, but with the preservation of military subordination to the political level.[87]

Strategic perspectives on civil-military relations tend to focus on the functional attitude and outcome rather than democratic and relational settings. However, imbalance in the power centres between civilian and military leaderships, whether both are equal or the military is more powerful, leads to tensions which either result in situations in which military conduct and policy are not synchronized,[88] or the military hijack the policy and militarize policy options or "tacticize" strategy[89] or, less damagingly, some compromises are made at the expense of the strategic bridging/collective thinking and action.[90]

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[83] Andrei Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought: 1917-1991* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999); Alexander Svechin, *Strategy (Minneapolis MN: East View Press, 1993).*

[84] Hew Strachan, *Direction of War*, pp.64-98.

[85] Yoram Peri, *Generals in The Cabinet Room: How the Israeli Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC : United States Institute of Peace, 2006); Yehuda Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press , 1995).

[86] In a discussion with Sir Hew Strachan at the RUSI Land Warfare Conference in 2014, Sir Hew referred to the Israeli model and how political/military partnership led to grave effects on strategy making. He advocated bringing the military's perspective during the decision making without removing democratic controls which are robust in the British case.

[87]Gray, *Strategy Bridge, pp. 202-206.*

Risa Brooks has implicitly adopted a third combined approach. She provided a list of functions in civil-military relations that are decisive to the outcome of war: information-sharing between military and political bodies, comprehensive and critical analysis and decision-making, the competence of the military to assess its capabilities, and the clear authorization remaining in the hands of politicians. Brooks made a relational inference as well in connection with these functions. She argued that power skewing towards either political or military levels, and the preference divergence, can both affect the quality of the above functions.[91]

Brooks's model is valuable, but it has three weak points methodologically. Firstly, it ignores the parameter of respecting professional expertise during the decision-making process. Second, she did not address the real problem in this sphere and how it is solved: the degree of involvement with and delegation of the strategic and military topics. Third, she ignored the other parameters of strategy-making which are more than simply having a critical and healthy institution; they include having a proper perception of war and strategy, and executing strategy by moulding the military means and conduct to reflect the strategic guidance in the dynamic environment of war. These methodological shortcomings led to holes in her research collection and analysis of the 1967 and 1973 wars which will be focussed on in the next chapters.

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[88] Such as in Egypt 1962-1967, Risa Brooks gave useful insight in her study, *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp.62-101.

[89] The Israeli strategic practice will be discussed later. Many authors such as Handel, Murray, Merom and Peri indicated the skewed civil-military relations and its drawbacks in militarizing policy and tacticizing strategy in Israel. Handel "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: The psychology of insecurity and the quest for absolute security" in Murray et al*, The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1996)*; Gil Merom, "The Architecture and Soft Spots in Israeli Grand Strategy" in Lee, Walling et al., *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality (London: Routledge, 2013)*; Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Israeli Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006); Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press , 1995).

[90] Colin Powell's modification of Weinberger's doctrine to intervene with decisive force and aim for a swift victory when vital interests were threatened, paved the road to Clinton's foreign policy advocating the use of military action overseas. However, a compromise was reached before the Bosnian campaign that political leadership should not interfere in operational parameters for the military to accept the intervention. Narcis Serra, *The Military Transition: Democratic Reform of the Armed Forces* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.202-238.

[91] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, pp. 42-53.

This study combines both relational and functional approaches with more focus on the second as the researcher is convinced by the emphasis on the weak causal links between policy outcomes and a specific political type of regime (for example: democratic vs. totalitarian regimes).[92]

The functions examined in this study are what Brooks identified: information sharing between military and political layers, critical and comprehensive assessments of strategic alternatives, and the clear authorization process, the latter being relational anyway.[93] However, the function of "the formidable position of the military", which is relational as well, is added here to reflect their power representation in the decision-making process and to represent their perspective on capability so that the strategy bridge is functioning. Secondly, her criterion of "competence of the military to assess their capability" has been omitted here as this can be better described in the practical layer of strategy-making and as a net result of better conceptual, institutional and practical abilities.

Regarding the involvement of politicians in military affairs, adding to the formal authorization of war, which may contradict professional necessities and expertise, it is argued that this involvement should be strategically sensitive, rather than the crude demarcation between what constitutes strategy and what constitutes operations and tactics. "Strategically sensitive involvement" has three elements: firstly, authorizing the whole planning process; secondly, what was expected to have direct strategic effect, as the former Israeli Chief of Staff, Mordechai Gur, advocated,[94] the politicians should intervene. But due to the fog of war and strategy[95] there is usually a difficulty in predicting the consequences of specific action or force structure before its materialization and whether these consequences will be tactical, operational or strategic. This leads to the third point: any military decision related to the effectiveness of the whole army or one of its services, as a whole, should be considered strategic until proven otherwise.

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[92] Michael C. Desch, "Democracy and Victory: Why Regime Type Hardly Matters", *International Security* (Vol 27, Issue 2, Fall 2002) pp.5-47.

[93] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, pp. 34- 41.

But is there a relational model to be applied in all contexts in relation to democratic countries?

Many indicated that some totalitarian actors such as the USSR, North Vietnam[96] or China, or even religiously fanatical ones like Hezbollah or Iran, achieved a high level of institutional efficiency despite not being democracies.[97] On the other hand, more established and "civilian controlled" civil-military relationships in the United States, Israel and Egypt have not prevented strategic practice from being incompetent.

I argue that civil, or rather political, relations are a product of political, sociological, cultural and strategic developments of the state and non-state actors. However, there is usually a "competent", rather than ideal, structure compatible with the prevailing socio-political settings which results in a balance of power enabling the institution to perform the functions. The relational model for a democratic actor would be functionally catastrophic in other socio-political settings. This relative approach in examining civil-military relations, in which functions are the goal, is what this study adopts.

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[94] He did not differentiate between the distinctive duties of strategic versus operational/tactical *commands*, but between strategic versus operational/tactical *issues*. If there is an operational or tactical decision which would have direct strategic/political consequences, the political/strategic leadership should interfere. Otherwise it should delegate to the military commanders. Yehuda Ben Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)* pp. 68-69.

[95] For a thorough discussion of the complexities historically associated with the fog of war planning, albeit in peace time see Talbot Emlay and Monica Toft (eds), *The Fog of Peace and War Planning: Military and Strategic Planning under Uncertainty* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[96] Stephen Biddle, and Robert Zirkle, ''Technology, Civil-Military Relations, and Warfare in the Developing World.'' *The Journal of Strategic Studies, London,* Vol **19,** June 1996) pp. 171-212.

[97] Biddle and Zirkle, "Technology", pp. 171-212.

Non-state actors, whether insurgent or terrorist, are also required to follow the principles for formulating and implementing strategy. However, due to their different context and internal structure the principles need to be applied differently.

Some irregular movements have separate political and military commands and so need to fulfil the same five requirements as states. But even if they have the same level of command to decide upon political and military strategy, there is a wide institutional gap between their strategic command and its operative or tactical subordinates. The movement is under security pressure which means that its institutional ability is always in a crisis of paradoxes.

One paradox is how to keep a strong centrality at the strategic level in order to maintain strategic direction, especially in an over-politicised conflict in which tactical actions have more strategic impact. At the same time they need to decentralise at the lower levels to facilitate political campaigning and irregular military action.

Another paradox is how a movement can maintain the healthy institutional characteristics of regeneration, critical thinking, comprehensive debate and avoiding its strategy becoming a dogma, while preserving security and unity.[98] These institutional requirements are usually more difficult to achieve, if not more complex, than in the case of regular or state actors. They need to share information and maintain comprehensive debate and clear authority over the military and in guiding operations. Innovative methods are needed to achieve these requirements to a suitable degree while coping with the previously mentioned contradictions, particularly to permit decentralized operational and tactical discourse.

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[98] These complexities were studied comparatively by Jacob Shapiro in *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organisations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

The Practical Tier

Theories of war and strategy held by some actors may be excellent and the institutional pattern may be healthy but this is not sufficient to execute strategy competently. There is always a “bridge”, as it was called by Gray, between theory and practice. With this bridge all natural, instrumental and human frictions interact. The assessment of strategy is not reasonable if it does not include the practical application of theory through institutional channels to give a sound strategic product and shape military practice and institutions accordingly.

Strategic performance may be good but winning war still is unattainable if it is below what is needed, if it falls short of the adversary’s or is hampered by bad luck. Nevertheless, the strategic ability to manage better performance is the most pragmatic roadmap for winning.

There are two major components in this practical layer: developing sound strategies and strategic guidance of operational competency.

Assessing the detailed strategies relies upon assessing the steps of strategy formulations (building a strategic framework and outlook, planning and programming), and examining the actual strategies by counter-factual analysis of alternatives, while allowing for time limitations in knowledge and tools.

The first step of strategy formulation is elaboration of a “story arc” or “specific theory for victory”. This necessitates holding a form of “strategic framework”[99] which is a general perception of the self, the opponent and others’ major strategic dimensions, intentions and scenarios.

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[99] The author is indebted to Williamson Murray for adopting this term.

By examining this framework, the strategist tries in a continuous dual way between theory and reality to tailor his adopted theory of victory. As J.C. Wylie described it,

> The evolution of a plan is the connection between the theoretical consideration of war and the conduct of war. It is the situation in which the strategist finds himself with a foot in each camp, so to speak, the one the conceptual or theoretical aspect of strategy and the other the combatant or practical aspect of strategy.[100]

To transform this theory of victory into practice, the strategist needs to formulate a strategic "plan" with a suitably dynamic character. As Murray *et al.* indicated, strategy is a "process" which requires "a constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate".[101]

Strategy is neither a mechanical process nor a chaotic phenomenon, as some post-modern strategists shuttered by the institutional and practical complexities of making strategy in a democratic state have claimed.[102] In one way, strategy as Churchill illustrated, is like painting; keeping the proportions and inter-relational characters right plus a hint of creativity.[103] Another way is that by looking at all the complexities of making or assessing strategies, people can come up with formidable strategic ideas, plans and attitudes, albeit with some necessary reductionism. This is the difference between the tasks of understanding and explanation respectively in examining politics, and both are needed.[104]

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[100] Wylie, *Military Strategy*, pp. 65-66

[101] Williamson Murray et al., *The Making of Strategy*, p1.

[102] Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy*, pp. 488-499.

[103] Eliot Cohen, "Churchill and Coalition Strategy in World War II" in Paul Kennedy (ed), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace (New Haven: Yale University, 1991)*.

[104] Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

The formulation of strategy itself, in its military sense, involves setting operational objectives and guiding the drawing up of operational plans with enough flexibility to allow for refinement, remodelling and reverse feedback during the course of the war.

Guiding the operational capabilities is studied through developing the major components outlined in the British Army Doctrine's definition of "Fighting Power"[105] but with a different regrouping: military doctrine, human (including morale, training, and leadership), organization (command/control/communication, logistics and force structure), and materials. However, what this study focuses on is the role of strategic command not only in enhancing these elements to counter-operationalize a specific opponent but, more importantly, how they shape fighting power to meet the strategic requirements.

This study strongly advocates the existence of the operational level of war, but only if levels of war are seen as diffusional and mutually dependent and the operational art is not reduced to a fixed formula but is strategically and contextually highly sensitive.

Methodology

The thesis uses the multiple case studies approach for theory development and refining. Its focus is a major theoretical problem: why states, especially those with military prowess, may win or lose wars in the short or long terms. To answer this, the study formulates an analytical framework of strategic logic and ability. Strategic logic is the principles governing the use of military and non-military means, with the main focus on the former, to achieve the policy ends in war. Strategic ability is perceiving the logic of strategy conceptually, fulfilling its requirements institutionally, and applying it through sound strategies to guide the fighting power.

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[105] British Army Doctrine Publications: *Land Operations,* first published 1 November 2010, last updated 31 March 2017.

The straightforward thinking is that competent conceptual and institutional layers should lead to a competent practical layer. If a state's strategy makers hold a proper strategic logic and keep a functioning organisation between the political and military spheres, they should be able to formulate a superior strategy. But this thesis holds that strategic logic and ability should not be taken in a mechanical way as strategic choices and behaviours are shaped by complex dimensions: geographical, societal, economical, and regime-type.

The study has two main assumptions to be tested:

First, the degree of competency in conceptual and institutional tiers of strategic ability should be reflected in the practical tier of ability. However, this pathway is shaped by personal characters and the competency of strategic leaders, the reaction of the enemy which might bring strategic opportunities or blunders, and the intervention of regional and international actors.

Second, having an advantageous strategic ability at the practical layer (sound strategies and guiding operational art and capability), leads to an advantageous war outcome over a scale of grades.

While the study tests these assumptions in order to answer the main question (why states with military prowess may fail to win strategically), it also attempts to explore secondary questions related to perceiving strategic logic in war and its application:

1. To what extent does strategic logic vary according to contexts and specific cases? Is there a different strategic logic in irregular versus regular wars?

2. How political-military relations are best organised for an efficient strategic function? Is there an ideal relational model? And how should the politicians' intervention in military operations be framed?

3. Is there a conceptual, institutional and practical usefulness in having an operational level of war? Is there a specific formula for operational art to be

militarily effective? Or is it rather a strategic function to shape the operational art according to the requirements of strategy and characters of war?

Before elaborating the methodological approach that is followed here, the nature and role of strategic theory, and its ways of building will be discussed.

The Nature and Role of Strategic Theory:

As Gray indicated, theory as a term has been "eminently contestable" in the fields of strategic studies. It may range from the simple act of explanation to a hypothesis only testable by experimental cross examination.[106] Harry Yarger defined strategic theory as a theory that "provides essential terminology and definitions, explanations of the underlying assumptions and premises, substantial propositions translated into testable hypotheses, and methods that can be used to test the hypotheses and modify theory as appropriate".[107]

But as Gray indicated, if the controlled experiments required for scientific inquiry are not possible, this makes historical inquiry the available method to reach a theory. This historical evidence is usually incomplete, contestable and leads to an unreliable conclusion.[108]

Most experts in strategic studies do not consider the discipline to be a science. As J.C. Wylie stated,

> I do not claim that strategy is or can be a 'science' in the sense of the physical sciences. It can and should be an intellectual discipline of the highest order, and the strategist should prepare himself to manage ideas with precision and clarity and imagination in order that his manipulation

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[106] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, pp.22-23.

[107] Harry Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, February 2006) p.1.

[108] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, p.23.

> of physical realities, the tools of war, may rise above the pedestrian plan of mediocrity.[109]

As Baylis *et al.* indicated, the real complexity of strategy is what moved Bernard Brodie away from seeking reliable, rigorously tested strategic theory in his 1949 paper "Strategy as a Science", to a "midcourse correction" when he criticized the negligence of political sense and diplomatic and military history,[110] and arrived at what Gray described as a "pessimistic attitude towards strategic theory" by equating it to strategic thinking.[111]

It is difficult to define causal links in strategic studies with determinist accuracy. As William Martel noted, "the failure of theorists and practitioners to develop in social science what has been known for decades as a causal theory... or reliable knowledge... with any degree of predictive quality".[112] Each result, political or military, is mostly caused by a combination of many variables dispersed across different dimensions. To complicate things, these variables are interdependent and any attempt to attribute the strategic effect to a sole variable, for example morale, political coherency, material resources, public spirit, valid doctrine and high level of command, is unwise. Also, it is nearly impossible by any methodology to isolate the confounding factors or to differentiate decisively between independent and conditioning factors, as in scientific experiments.

Secondly, as Clausewitz and others indicated, many of the variables such as moral factors are hard to identify, let alone quantify.[113]

Thirdly, the phenomenon of war has a unique feature – the adversary's initiatives and responses -- which makes the predictive power of any theory inaccessible. As

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[109] Wylie, *Military Strategy*, p. 13.

[110] Baylis et al, *Strategy in the Contemporary World,* p.5.

[111] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, p.23.

[112] Martel, *Victory in War*, p.93.

[113] Clausewitz, On War, pp.136-138.

Clausewitz stated, a theory that aims to predict is unfeasible in a field in which adversary actions, frictions, ambiguity, uncertainty and chance dominate.[114]

However, while granting all the shortcomings of political and strategic theory that make absolute and reliable knowledge unattainable in the phenomenon of war, advocates of a more rigorous discipline that is closer to scientific formulae responded that the alternative is leaving intellectual inquiry to vacuum filled only by personal whims.[115]

Nevertheless, this study holds that the inability of strategic theory to predict, in a determinist way, is not a restricting factor on the desire and ability to formulate a strategic theory, albeit not a determinist positive one. The function of this theory is not simply to predict, or to guide the strategist by scientific formula, but to guide him in his self-education and to provide a framework of analysis.[116] So, as Hugh Smith stated, it guides the "praxis"; the self-development pathway, rather than the "practice" in a direct way.[117]

Models of theory development in Strategic Studies

The first model is the pure historical approach. It is convinced by the uniqueness of historical events and the specific role of personal and moral factors, so a theory with wider application cannot be generated. This approach neglected the overriding concepts of war that transcend all times.[118] There is a modification offered by Jon Sumida after studying Clausewitz: use of a ready theory to fill in the inevitable gaps in historical records. So, theory is the path to a sound historical exploration, not only an explanation. History is not a tool for theorizing, but for training the subconscious mind of the strategist.[119] But Sumida did not clarify how this pre-formed theory for the use of historians was already formed.

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[114] Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 133-141.

[115] Janet Buttolph Johnson, *Political Science Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press, 2005) pp.27-40; David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science: Political Analysis, (London:* Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.6-11.

[116] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.90.

[117] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.90 and Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)*.

[118] Jon Tetsuro Sumida. "The Relationship of History and Theory on War: The Clausewitzian Ideal and Its Implications". *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. **65,** No. 2 (April 2001) pp. 333-354.

The second is the American approach which was criticized by many.[120] History, according to this approach, is irrelevant as everything changes: technology, tactics, socio-political patterns, strategic problems and roles of command. This school adopted the practical approach: if something works in practice once it will work again. This pragmatic approach neglects the fact that different contexts cause the governing principles to be applied differently. It grasps the tail, not the head, of the strategic phenomenon.

The third model is an opposite approach to the previous one. Practice is very elusive and history is irrelevant because history can support any theoretical claims that are imposed upon it. This was represented by André Beaufre in his introduction on strategy. For him, the only way to theorize is by logical process.[121] This approach shares the same methodological assumptions of the classic political scientists' deductive approach.

The fourth is a modified approach. Admiral Wylie followed a methodology, as he described, combining the logical and practical pathways.[122] Again, history was largely neglected.

The fifth approach was the Clausewitzian, in its primitive form, which combines logical, historical and practical elements. What Clausewitz did in "On War" was a combination of logical process and historical analysis in a very dialectic way that left room for practice. He was in a continuous and dynamic double pathway between logical processing and history or, to put it another way, between deductive and inductive methods.

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[119] Sumida. "The Relationship of History and Theory on War", pp. 333-354.

[120] Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (London: Longman, 1973) pp.433-460; Bernard Brodie, *General A. Beaufre On Strategy: A Review of Two Books* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1965); Colin Gray, *Strategy and History: Essays on Theory and Practice* (Oxon: Routledge 2006) pp.34-52.

[121] Brodie*, General A. Beaufre On Strategy*.

[122] Wylie, *Military Strategy*, pp. 14- 20.

Although he relied on logical process to lay down his theory, historical inquiry was used to refine theoretical assumptions. His application of historical analysis to transform the logical reasoning of absolute war/war on paper to war constrained by politics and friction is illustrative.[123]

The end theoretical product of "On War" was considered by Clausewitz himself as an intermediate product, as it needs practice, or critical analysis of history if practice is not available, to complete its maturation. He explained how the critical analysis of historical events may open the door for demonstrating general truth. However, in this analysis it "must be taken that every aspect bearing on the truth at issue is fully and circumstantially developed" and required a careful consideration of diverse circumstances to ensure historical examples are not misused. [124]-[125] The outcome of "On War" was not a rigid positive theory that guides the practice in a mechanical manner or predicts. Rather, it is a conceptual framework that guides the training of the strategist and is open to further modifications by him as practice indicates.

The field of political science entered new phases of development too. Its curve shifted from the purely deductive approach in the 1950s and 1960s to the behaviourist peak in the 1970s, to more mature combined approaches after that. As Lauren discussed thoroughly, the last trend was to combine both deductive and historically based approaches.[126] This is best shown in the historically-based case studies approach.

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[123] Clausewitz, *On War*, pp.78-87, 119-121.

[124] Clausewitz, *On War,* pp.171-172. This was also reflected in Michael Howard's "The Use and Abuse of Military History" in *The Causes of Wars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983) pp.188-197.

[125] This historically based critical analysis seems to be different from revisiting history when refining the logical assumptions. Sumida indicated that Clausewitz used this historical critical analysis approach in his extended treatise on the Napoleonic Wars, and he preferred this approach over the wide historical survey. This study argues that Clausewitz used both methods for different objectives. Clausewitz himself acknowledged the other functions of historical analysis in addition to theory building such as explaining and idea or showing the application of an idea or to support a statement (p.171).

Case Studies and Theory Building

Theory development in political and social observational studies was sought in two ways: Large-N studies and comparative controlled case studies.[127] Large N studies use statistical logic to identify the frequencies of variables which are then used to draw causal links. Adding to the epistemological challenges mentioned above, one of the shortcomings of this method was the chaotic links being developed in some researches.[128] New trends emphasise the necessity of applying some degree of qualitative research methods in order to guide the quantitative methods. This confirmed the value of comparative case studies.

The case study is an essential tool in research methodology in the political and social sciences. It was believed that its functions lie in the exploratory sphere. Robert Yin asserted, however, that case study has both exploratory and explanatory functions, depending on the questions and the nature of the research.[129] The rationale behind the explanatory function is to assess dependent and independent variables to confirm the presumed causal links.

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[126] Paul Gordon Lauren, *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), pp.4-6. Avi Kober for example, conducted his study on *Coalition Defection: The Dissolution of Arab Anti-Israeli Coalitions in War and Peace* (Westport CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002) following a new trend in political sciences grounded in historical approach.

[127] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaka, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015) p.25.

[128] Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison", in Paul Gordon Lauren, *Diplomacy, p.46*

[129] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design And Methods* (New York: Sage Publishing, 2003) pp. 5-20.

Lijphart and Eckstein identified different types of case study depending on their objectives and methodology.[130] The most challenging type is that in which case studies can help in building up a theory; this is called a "theory generating" or "heuristic" case study, and this is our interest here.

Alexander George developed a methodological framework on how multiple case studies can be used in a focused and structured way in order to develop a theory, the heuristic case study approach. This approach is focused as "it deals selectively with only a certain aspect of the historical case", and structured as "it employs general questions to guide the data collection and analysis in that historical case."[131]

In George's model, case studies pass through three stages: design, doing the actual case studies, and drawing the theoretical formula from them.

In his more recent study,[132] George illuminated two analytical techniques: causal link tracing inside each case, and cross comparisons among cases to testify the causal link. In the latter technique, different confounding variables are manipulated (silenced) from one case to another.[133]

Another advantage George suggested from this approach suggested is the ability of focused structured comparisons to develop a typological theory which he described as "rich and differentiated theory". This theory, in contrast to general theory, has "the capability for more discriminating explanations". This type of theory explains the "variety" of how the general theoretical themes are applied in different contexts, so it represents a more "policy- relevant theory".[134]

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[130] Quoted in George, "Case Studies and Theory Development" which indicated that case studies can explore the examined event or phenomenon and unravel its layers and process. This was called 'a theoretical case study' or a 'configurative-idiographic' one. Moreover, a case study can use a ready theory to explain the outcome of the studied case or cases; this is called a 'disciplined-configurative' or 'interpretive' case study. On the other hand, the ready theory can be tested in case studies to find out whether its assumptions or causal links are found in the cases being studied; this is called the 'critical' type.pp.51-53.

[131] George, "Case Studies and Theory Development", pp.54-59.

[132] A. George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (London: MIT Press 2005).

[133] Morem, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars,* p.28.

The Approach Adopted

Seven case studies were selected to test the main hypotheses (2 majors: the 1967 and 1973 wars; and 4 minors: 1948, Attrition, the PLO, Hezbollah and Hamas wars).[135]

The method of difference[136] is used for this selection.136 Four regular wars (1948, 1967, Attrition and 1973) are between the same main belligerents, Israel and Egypt. It is useful to examine how variance in the proposed cause -- advantageous strategic ability -- leads to variable war outcomes. This can be found to some extent also in Israel's fight against Arab Irregulars. The 1948 War provides a case study in which Israel had a completely opposite war outcome than that which the study searches for (different dependent variable not just internal variation).

Competing explanations for war winning will be traced and assessed in each case: quantitative and qualitative power, quality of diplomacy and war termination, asymmetric strategy, achieving military victory. The strength of the thesis is represented by the congruity of the presumed link between advantageous ability and outcome, and by either silencing the competing theories or less congruity.

In cases of mismatches between the proposed hypothesis and the articulated causal links in case studies, some modifications will be sought, either by acknowledging more interdependent or conditioning variables, or by reassessing the variables' interdependence.

Measurements and Research Tools

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[134] Morem, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars,* p.28.

[135] The 1956 Arab-Israeli military confrontation is not discussed here as it was considered a secondary aspect of the Suez Crisis.

[136] Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, pp.48-49.

Winning the war in its direct aftermath is measured in this study over three grades. “Strategic success” is achieving the political aims for which the war was waged in the short term, and providing the military and non-military requirements for policy success in the long term if they were delineated. “Strategic advantage” is when one state does not achieve its full list of political aims; however, its proportional political achievement is still higher than the opponent’s. “Relative Superiority” occurs if neither party achieves its political aims, or they both achieve them as a stalemate, so other factors in recognising the winning status are included, mainly the costs of war and the advantageous status of any post-war arrangement for either party.

Measuring strategic ability is more complex as it contains three tiers with multiple components in each, and most of them are qualitatively assessed. The assessments of the tiers are then combined as low, medium and high depending on marking. Lastly, the grade of advantageous ability will be generated by comparing the strategic ability of each belligerent, as low, medium or high.

The conceptual layer will be assessed by tracing the elements of strategic logic in political and military thinking and communications, and the quality of strategic education if it conveys these ideas.

This is a hard task as was indicated, but inferences can be made by looking at leaders’ diaries, important speeches, educational curricula and, if possible, the minutes of the strategic meetings.

The institutional layer will be assessed through five functional and relational criteria: information sharing, critical assessment, clear authorization by politicians, formidable position of the military and strategic-sensitive political involvements in operational and tactical matters. In the case of irregular movements, “decentralized operations and tactics” will replace “the formidable stand of military”.

The practical layer has two major components: generating sound strategies and guiding operational art and capabilities.

Generating sound strategies is decomposed further to: clear policy aim, sound grand strategy and sound military strategy. It is assessed by considering the alternatives counterfactually[137] and assessing which one was closer to applying the strategic logic with the given resources.

Guiding fighting power is decomposed to: shaping operational art strategically and enhancing operational capabilities in four areas: military doctrine, human (including morale, training, and leadership), organization (command/control/communication, logistics and force structure), and materials.

Given the scarce archival sources for the wars in this study due to sensitivity to security matters in both the Arabs, and to lesser degree, Israel[138], this research depends heavily on the diaries of political and military leaders of both sides. However, it uses cross comparisons and inferences distilled from other sources or from the actual course of events, to settle the contesting narratives. On a few occasions like the original plan of Egyptian crossing in 1973, it applies what was suggested by Jon Sumida after studying Clausewitz: use of a ready theory of strategy to fill in the inevitable gaps in historical records.

The study also relies on secondary sources from both sides and international strategists. Two of these sources were exceptionally valuable. The first was based on the Israeli archives of the 1967 War which have been mostly available recently.[139] The second included Egyptian operational and tactical documents of the 1973 war that were confiscated by the Israeli forces and also made available.[140] Heikal's books on the 1967 and 1973 wars also contained presidential minutes and other important documents. This thesis has also benefited from other primary sources such as the CIA military balance estimate of the belligerents on the eve of the 1967 war and two British archives about the ceasefire proposals in 1973, and few interviews.

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[137] A strong argument for this method can be found in Niall Ferguson, *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (London: Penguin, 2011). But as Dale Walton warned, these counterfactuals should be like "shifting the pieces on the chessboard", but also be strategically relevant and not alien to the actor's cultural parameters. Dale Walton, *The Myth of the Inevitable U.S. Defeat in Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 2002) p12. I would add it should also be conservative, addressing few strategic moves and have a short chain of reaction.

[138] In 2004, Israel made some of its political and military resources one the 1967 war available, but Egypt did not. Both sides still keep their 1973 historical archives secret. Thus, due to complex security and political measures, the researcher was not able to access the Israeli sources directly.

[139] Ami Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Why the Arab/Israeli Wars?

The Arab-Israeli Wars were chosen as the applied field for my research for various reasons: personal, general and methodological.

Personally, the researcher had a previous knowledge of different phases of the conflict across many dimensions: cultural, social, political and military. Also, the researcher's mother tongue is Arabic which enables him to go through Arabic sources which are mostly unavailable in English. Regarding the Israeli resources, although the researcher is learning Hebrew, it is difficult to gain a strong grip on reviewing the complex literature available in the years allowed for a PhD. Nevertheless, the Israeli academic works on military matters have a high rate of translation to English or were written in English in the first place.[141]

Generally, the Arab Israeli conflict, especially the events and outcomes of the 1967 and 1973 wars,[142] has been the triggering point of regional, and sometimes international, conflicts for decades. In the post-Cold War world, this has continued to be the case. Gulf War II, the Second Intifada, the rise of Al-Qaeda, and the Global

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[140] Dani Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for Yom Kippur: An Analysis* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2009).

[141] Z. A. Maman Rozenhek and E. Ben-Ari, "The Study of War and the Military in Israel: An Empirical Investigation and a Reflective Critique", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, **35** (2003), pp. 461-484.

[142] Oren, Michael, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter that Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2005).

War on Terror,[143] the Lebanon War and ongoing Middle East political and social problems can be linked, at least partially, to this conflict.

However, personal and general factors are not the most important motivations. Methodologically, the three wars chosen fulfil the methodological requirements of this research.

As this research aspires to add something to the general theory, this "act to generalize" is compatible with studying a conflict which has different phases, actors and types of war. Theory is all about defining the causal links and making a distinction between independent and confounding variables. Isolation (in an experimental sense), which aims to isolate the confounding variables from independent variables, is easy to undertake in the physical sciences. However, in the social and political sciences, isolation is not applicable but its effects can be achieved to some extent, albeit not completely or assertively, by studying different types and presentations of the phenomenon under research where the competing theories can be silenced on-off in cases.[144]

The case studies, as indicated, are the best candidates for using the method of difference. Also, competing theories were more prone to be silenced or be shown to be incongruous in the Conclusion.

The military victories and strategic winning alternate among the selected study cases. In the 1948 War, Israel achieved a strategic success due to a high strategic ability in spite her inferiority in the terms of battlefield outcomes, the state's power means and fighting power, at least for the first half of war. In the 1967 war, there was a paradox between an outstanding Israeli military decisiveness and low political gain. A more complex pattern occurred in 1973 when the initial military breakthrough for Egypt did not lead to a strategic success; rather, poor strategic performance led to operational and strategic difficulties. Israel, on the other hand, suffered from operational difficulties and a far lesser military advantage in 1973 in comparison to 1967. However, due to the earlier devastating Egyptian strategic advantage and prevailing super power dynamics, Egypt managed finally to gain a calculated strategic advantage, and Israel achieved the best grand strategic advantage in her record by achieving a peace agreement with Egypt, albeit not until 1979.

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[143] Analysis of Al Qaeda founders Bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam's discourses, elaborates how central the issue of Palestine and Jerusalem was. Azzam was famous for his maxim "The road to Jerusalem passes through Kabul". Alia Brahimi, *Jihad and Just War in the War on Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) pp.125-131; Gwynne Dyer, *Don't Panic! ISIS, Terror, and Today's Middle East* (London: Periscope, 2015). Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "IEDs, Martyrs, Civil Wars and Terrorists" in Kennedy-Pipe et al, *Terrorism and Political Violence* (London: Sage, 2015) p.163.

[144] George, "*Case Studies and Theory Development*", pp.54-57

Patterns were completely non-linear in asymmetric wars as well. Israel managed its war well with the PLO, but faced great strategic dilemmas with Hezbollah. The war with Hamas was mixed.

These multiple cases with different patterns[145] are an excellent research ground for cross comparison and developing a rich typological theory.

Having studied both regular and irregular wars, the study also offers an ample opportunity to compare strategic logic and ability, operational art, or peculiarities of political-military relations between them. One of the main themes of this study is to clarify what is contestant and variable in the theory of strategy and operational art.

Lastly, the primary question is related to the inability of some actors to achieve winning in war in spite of an ample military edge. This is dealt with extensively by studying the Arab/Israeli Wars where the Israelis' military power edge is incontestable for most of the conflict. Approaching the conflict as a whole is suitable as a single case study to shed some light on how long and protracted conflicts are, or are not, concluded by manipulating the strategic dimensions or considering the conflict insoluble.

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[145] As Van Evera indicated, case studies are best chosen for extreme values in their dependent and independent variables as well as with variances inside the case. Moreover the 1948 War was a war with more different *dependent* variables than others, allowing strategic success for Israel, showing methodological strength and avoiding common methodological faults. Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, pp.63-66.

Originality

This study represents an endeavour at the level of general strategic theory. It also attempts to locate the inquiry into the strategic weakness of actors with significant military prowess within the major lines of strategic thought.

To answer this inquiry, the thesis developed a theoretical pathway which did not stop at the reformulation of general strategic theory, but had to resolve major theoretical disputes in conceptualizing the levels of war, the nature and strategic orientation of the operational art and efficient settings of political-military relations.

The study also developed a framework for estimating war outcome strategically (strategic success, strategic advantage and relative success). It emphasises that the share of military outcome in achieving political success in the short and long term should be acknowledged in a reasonable sense, without amplification or diminution, and should be considered contextual.

More importantly, the study has developed the concept of "strategic logic in war" and laid out its internal structure, and introduced the framework of "strategic ability in war". The thesis differentiated strictly between the latter and the "fighting power", the concept that embodied western doctrines and dealt with the sub-strategic level of war.

Methodologically, it adopts a compound and more rigorous method than that which has dominated traditional strategic thinking, without being, as Clausewitz says, "dragged down to a state of dreary pedantry". [146]

At the level of applied research, the study tries to fill in the gaps in the literature of the Arab-Israeli wars – in as fair and non-partisan a way as possible – since the existing literature is mostly focused either on operational or political concerns and only a few exceptions deal with the link between military conduct and political aims.

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[146] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 222.

The study looks at seven Arab-Israeli Wars and uses their richness and heterogeneity to test different theoretical propositions which confuse the eternal "nature" of strategy with its evolving and changing "characters".

Structure

The study will move after this introduction to enrich the theoretical foundations of strategic logic in war (Chapter Two).

Chapters Three and Four examine the Wars of 1967 and 1973 respectively (the southern front between Egypt and Israel), with a brief discussion of the 1948 War and the War of Attrition. Each chapter starts by giving the political background of the war, and then the strategic ability with its three layers will be examined for each side in order to reach a comparative assessment. Finally, the outcome of war is measured on the adopted scale. Chapter Five includes short case studies; the irregular wars between Israel and three irregular Arab movements (the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), Hezbollah and Hamas).

The Conclusion in the final chapter sums up the fruits of studying the Arab Israeli wars, performing cross comparisons and reaching concluding points and answering the research questions at the levels of theory and the applied research area.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORTICAL OUTLOOK:

STRATEGIC LOGIC IN WAR

Elements of Strategic Logic in War

All wars are simply a phenomenon in which military force is used to achieve specific political aims. [1] As the primary character of war is a **duel**, the path to the political aim materialises by affecting the opponent's will. There two distinct models of using military force: the first is the ***war model which*** aims to affect the opponent's political will to resist. In the second type, the *public policy model,* military means and operations aim to achieve destructive or pervasive intermediary conditions (concerning security, nation building and expertise) required by higher governmental policy. This study focuses on the first type.[2]

Clausewitz highlighted affecting the enemy's will in On War, stating "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."[3] However, the general *ways* and *conditioning* elements of affecting the political will were insufficiently developed in On War. They were mentioned in different contexts and under a variety of titles, but not clearly organized. The inherited methodological and linguistic difficulties in the book further jeopardize the conceptual clarity of understanding how strategy works.

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[1] Both Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp.40-46 and Brian Bond, *Pursuit of Victory: from Napoleon to Saddam Hussein* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp.*178-179* discredited efficiently the flawed assumptions about the so-called 'non-political' wars.

[2] Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty First Century Combat as Politics* (London: Hurst and Company, 2013) p.1, differentiated between two forms of force utilisation, 'the use of armed forces within a military domain that seeks to establish military conditions for political solution, a practice traditionally associated with the concept of war' and the second, 'the use of armed forces that directly seeks political as opposed to specifically military outcomes, which lies beyond the scope of war in its traditional paradigm'. He argued that many current conflicts and peace operations would lie in the second. This differentiation was not accurate as military force was used historically for both military and direct political aims such as in the use of air power for example. Interestingly, Liddell Hart's *Strategy the Indirect Approach,* called the second use of the military arm 'grand strategic' because it's valuable in directing our focus to the political sensitivities of using military means. Moreover, it is not helpful in delineating the strategic logic. What is more helpful however, is categorizing the use of force depending on the military 'duel' of two opposing political wills, as this will differentiate between war and the use of the military in some modern operations.

[3] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.75.

In general, strategic logic can be understood as "how" the military is used through its operational objectives and tactical efforts to achieve the desired change in the enemy's political ***will***. This is "the strategic effect" that paves the way to achieve political aims in war.

The calculus of strategy is the means-ways-ends equation. Strategy uses military force, primarily in war, and other means in specific ways to achieve the policy ends.

Strategy as a Bridge and the Levels of War

The role of strategy, as a logic and institution, is to bridge the gap between policy and operations, and to keep a healthy link with feedback in both directions and refinement of plans. Strategy should make sure that military operations are directed to achieve a specific "strategic effect", which is deemed necessary by policy, and not act to disrupt policy aims, exceed them or fall short of them.

Strategy should also make sure that policy provides the military with the resources needed, and that policy does not ask for wider objectives beyond the military's ability. As simple as this looks on paper, it is tremendously difficult in practice given the institutional tensions and cultural clashes between the military and the politicians in ideas, attitude and language. Hence, the role of strategist, and strategy, is a bridging power between two spheres with different norms and attitudes, a "currency converter" as it was described by Gray.[4]

Clausewitz used the word "strategy" in different contexts and in both strategic and operational senses.[5] He says for example: "The strategist must therefore define an aim for the entire operational side of the war that will be in accordance with its purpose…" and he adds: "he will, in fact, shape the individual campaigns and within this decide on the individual engagements. Since most of these assumptions may not prove correct, while other more detailed orders cannot be determined in advance at all, it follows that the strategist must go to the campaign itself"[6]. Clausewitz devoted Book Three "On Strategy in General", mostly to the art of generalship in the operational, and sometimes even in the tactical, sense. Hugh Smith stated that Clausewitz used the term in a sense similar to what we call today "operational strategy" or "operational art", or how major military means are organised and manipulated to achieve the higher operational (military) objectives.[7]

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[4] Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.135.

[5] Michael Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.32-37.

This is clearly not the case, as Clausewitz spoke of strategy in the sense of using *military* means, and victories to achieve *political* aims. He indicated the fusionist character of levels of war which dictate the umbilical connection between policy and strategy, strategy and operations, and tactics.

As the operational level of war was still in its infancy at the time of Clausewitz, he assumes that upper operational manipulation lies in the hands of strategists, so he had to coin the term **"pure strategy"** in Book Eight to differentiate things strategic from what strategists were required to do in the technological and communicational atmosphere of the early nineteenth century. Also important is his emphasis on the real time management of engagements by being on the spot.

It is important that **levels of war** are conceived as a whole and in order, not replacing ends with means, and also as an institutional (and democratic) necessity to keep policy and military apart. However, over-levelling is harmful. Strategy is a bridge, and the bridge does not exist analogically if it is not linking two edges. For this reason, Clausewitz noticed that the highest level of strategy is merged into policy. "In short, at the highest level the art of war turns into policy, but a policy conducted by fighting battles rather than sending diplomatic notes".[8] And, based on that, the lowest level of strategy is merged into higher operational thinking and practice. This "fusionist" approach in perceiving strategy was supported also by Alastair Finlan.[9] Hence, the term "pure strategy" deals with the essence of strategic thinking and practice, exactly in the middle of the strategic rainbow but moving gradually to each edge.

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[6] Clausewitz, On War, p 177.

[7] Smith, *On Clausewitz*; David Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives: A Case Study in the Operational Level of War* (London: Routledge 2006) p.14.

[8] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.607.

Although Clausewitz did not forge a strict definition of what he meant by "pure strategy", he stated that it deals with war as whole and would be discussed in the chapters of Book Eight on War Plans. In this book, nobody can misunderstand what Clausewitz conceives as the essence of strategic thinking: linking military campaigns to political aims. Clausewitz discussed the impact of political aims on military objectives, the will of the enemy and how it is assessed, two types of war depending on the scale and limits of the war objectives, and different strategic and operational patterns in each type.

Clausewitz was aware that his writings could evoke ambiguities and obscure the strategic lamp behind the fumes of operational and tactical issues. In his note of 1827, he stressed the importance of Book Eight, its role in organising the mind of the strategist, and the need for more development of his thinking.[10]

This not to deny that the most common usage of "strategy" in the nineteenth century was mainly operational, as was described by Vego.[11] Clausewitz himself in his note of 1830 pointed to the lack of clarity in common usage of the word, "The theory of major operations (strategy, as it is called) presents extraordinary difficulties."[12]

Another source of confusion is the distinction between grand and military strategy. Grand strategy as coined in British strategic literature has two components: the comprehensive and higher manipulation of military and non-military means to achieve the policy ends in a case of war, and long-term strategic planning of defence in war and peace.

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[9] Alaistair Finlan, *Contemporary Military Strategy and the Global War on Terror: US & UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq 2001-2012* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014) pp. 7-8.

[10] Clausewitz, *Two Notes by the Author on His Plans for Revising on War* edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Bernard Brodie and Rosalie West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) pp. 69-72.

[11] Milan N Vego, "Policy, Strategy and Operations", in Handel et al, *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality,* p. 119.

[12] Clausewitz, *"Two Notes by the Author*", p.70.

Grand strategy in war, as was described by Hart, aims to supply the fighting machine with its human and material resources, and also to regulate, orchestrate and combine military and non-military means for the purpose of war.[13]

He also said: "The crux of grand strategy lies in policy, that is, in the capacity of the nation's leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation's long-term (that is, in wartime and peacetime) best interests".

Adding to the routine mixing between policy and grand strategy in the previous definition, Hart made this distinction between grand strategy and military strategy, "whereas strategy is only concerned with the problem of ***winning military victory***, grand strategy must take the longer view – for its problem is the winning of the peace. Such an order of thought is not a matter of 'putting the cart before the horse', but of being clear where the horse and cart are going"[14].

Clearly, Hart considers the utility of military conduct in order to achieve the political aim as a grand strategic responsibility, so he criticized the term of "strategic air bombing" and offered a more "correct" term "grand strategic bombing" as it does not aim to attain a military victory on the battlefield but to modify the opponent's political will directly.

However, Hart keeps the means-ways-ends strategic calculus clear, and knows where the cart and the horse are going; it is not a problem in practice. Nevertheless, this requires the grand strategist to manipulate the detailed military strategies in order to direct and control their arrays towards the policy ends. The problem in this is incompatibility with the modern institutional parameters of civil-military relations and the usually weak military experience of political leaders. Hence, the military strategist in Hart's model should know exactly the *political utility* of its military means and objectives. He should know how his military objectives produce the aimed "strategic effect" to achieve the ends of policy, whether the objectives should be victory or not and on what scale, and that they should be under continuous review due to the unpredictable risks and chances of war. If we replace what Hart called "military strategy" with "operational strategy" or "operational art" this tension is resolved.

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[13] Liddell Hart, *Strategy: The Indirect Approach* (London: Penguin, 1991) pp.349-350.

[14] Hart, *Strategy*, pp. 349-350 (my emphasis).

The last point was best described by Clausewitz in the statement:

> Strategy is the use of engagement for the purpose of war. The strategist must therefore define *an aim for the entire operational side of war what will be in accordance with its purpose.* He will draft the plan of the war, and the aim will determine a series of actions intended to achieve it. He will, in fact:

1- Shape the individual campaigns and, within these,
2- Decide on the individual engagements.[15]

Although the destruction of the enemy's army was considered many times by Calusewitz as the legitimate military objective in war, he also gave different variations: "They range from the destruction of the enemy's force, the conquest of his territory, to a temporary occupation or invasion, to projects with an immediate political purpose, and finally to passively waiting for enemies attacks. As any of these may be used to overcome the enemy's will, the choice depends on circumstances."[16]

Military objectives, then, are not ends in themselves; they are just means in the hands of the strategists to produce specific strategic effects to facilitate the materialization of the political aims. This strategic effect is the enabler of the enemy's change of will.

The desired strategic effects are named by Clausewitz as the objectives of war. He says, "The object of war can vary just as much as its **political purpose** and its **actual circumstances".**

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[15] Clausewitz, *On War,* p.177 (my numbering and emphasis).

[16] Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 91-98.

The eternal malady in the world's militaries is mixing the levels of analysis; where strategy is replaced by operational thinking and the variety of military objectives is mummified in a single and rigid objective - the destruction of the enemy forces in the battlefield. The strategic outlook on the military conduct is mostly missed.

Instead, Clausewitz enumerated many war, or strategic, objectives which vary depending on the scope and nature of the political purpose which drives them. In a war with **limited aims** the strategic effect needed maybe to increase the cost for the enemy in order to affect his political will. Increasing the cost as an aim presents different military options in order to inflict general and expensive damage. Hence, the strategist manipulates military conduct to choose specific operations with military objectives which may be different from a straightforward tactical victory.

> It is easy to imagine two alternatives: one operation is far more advantageous if the purpose is to defeat the enemy; the other is more profitable if that cannot be done. The first tends to be described as the more military, the second the more political alternative. From the highest point of view, however, one is as military as the other, and neither is appropriate unless it suits its particular condition.[17]

In his discussion of defensive wars with limited aims, Clausewitz differentiated between two defensive patterns. The first is strategically passive and aims at wearing down the enemy and waiting for a turning point, as was the position of Frederick the Great during the Seven Years War. The second, exemplified by the Russian strategy in the 1812 campaign, involves a positive aim which requires a counter-attack to chase the enemy forces after an opening defensive phase. Although this description is mainly operational, the implications of the two approaches to defence cannot be understood without the strategic outlook.[18]

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[17] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.93.

[18] Clausewitz, *On War,* pp.611-617.

The Crux of Strategic Logic: Two Types of Wars

There is an organizing principle in defining the *ways* of strategy which is related to how and to what extent the enemy's political will needs to be changed. Two major patterns of war were described briefly by Clausewitz: war with unlimited/total aims[19] and war with limited aims.

In the first, the enemy's will is destroyed and the military target is the total destruction of the enemy's capability to fight, this is ″annihilation of the enemy″.

In explaining how this "will" might be crushed, Clausewitz stated that it required the destruction of the enemy's Centre of Gravity (COG). The term COG was coined by Clausewitz and is one of his great achievements. Alas, COG has been interpreted for generations, as Handel indicated, in purely mechanical and operational terms as simply the destruction of the enemy forces in the battlefields.[20]

Clausewitz, however, defines COG in wider terms as, "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed". Although the enemy's army is a COG as it is his main means of resistance, it is not the only one, or even the most important one in affecting the enemy's will in all cases. In his dialectic approach, Clausewitz describes the COG of "theoretical war" as annihilating the enemy's forces, but his comprehensive analysis has been continually misunderstood and over-simplified. A COG varies from one state to another or one actor to another depending on its character and circumstance. As Clausewitz said: "What the theorist has to say here is this: one must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain centre of gravity develops." Then he provided some examples of COG depending on the nature of the state:

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[19] Clausewitz did not use the term of "war with total aims" but only described this type of war as "defeating the enemy" in contrast to "wars with limited aims" with its two subtypes offensive and defensive in Book Eight. If we choose to use "war with total aims", this should be differentiated from the "total war" concept which was put to work in the two Worlds Wars where both means of war and the targets of military operations (military or civilians) were total.

[20] Handel, *Masters of War,* pp.56-60.

> For Alexander, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII, and Frederick the Great, the centre of gravity was their army. If the army had been destroyed, they would all have gone down in history as failures. In countries subject to domestic strife, the centre of gravity is generally the capital. In small countries that rely on large ones, it is usually the army of their protector. Among alliances, it lies in the community of interest, and in popular uprisings it is the personalities of the leaders and public opinions.[21]

This list is not prescriptive but descriptive. Choosing the appropriate COG, whether one or more, depends on the circumstances of the particular case. Although Michael Handel warned seriously against handling the concept of COG in a mechanical and simplistic way, he himself did so in considering the ordered preferences of COG for Clausewitz in contrast to the order of Sun Tzu.[22]

In the second pattern of war, the aim is to modify the enemy's will under pressure and the military targets are more diverse. Military targets are selected for their capacity to deliver an impact on the enemy to modify his will. This effect is a proportional feeling of insecurity and a perception on the part of the enemy that victory is unreachable.

There are indefinite ways to affect the opponent's will to give up his offensive aims (by defensive warfare) or to give some concessions (by offensive warfare), but all may catalyse the will change by affecting the enemy's **calculations** using one or more of three drivers: "the first is the improbability of victory, the second is its unacceptable cost, [23] and the third is feeling insecure[24].

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[21] Clausewitz, *On War*, pp.595-597.

[22] Handel, *Masters of War,* pp.56-60. As Sun Tzu said in the Art of War: 'Therefore, the best warfare strategy is to attack the enemy's plans, next is to attack alliances, next is to attack the army, and the worst is to attack a walled city.' Sun Tzu, *Art of War* translated by Lionel Giles (Pax Librorum Publishing House , eBook, 2009) chapter 3.

Clausewitz gave different examples of ways to attain the desired strategic effect: occupying land for bargaining at the peace table, inflicting general damage through destroying the enemy forces or seizure of territory, direct political pressure on his alliance or forming a new alliance for oneself. One can add to these disrupting the enemy's socio-political order, and wearing him down through human, economic or even moral losses, which is mostly confined to defensive wars.[25]The enemy's COG may be identifiable and targeted in wars with limited aims, albeit to a relative extent to reach the strategic effect mentioned above.

The offensive side in a war chooses limited aims either because he is obliged to by the nature of the existing balance of power, or because of his preference for the best post-war political order, or due to his political ideology.

Again, the strategic pathway chosen is a matter of contextualization and depends on the circumstances and the characteristics of the belligerents.

Special Strategic Theories: Linking Operations to Strategy

Now our analysis shifts to the means of strategy, which are not specifically the detailed military forces but their combined military effect.

The question arises though as to whether an understanding of the military outcome can be approached without appreciating the ways the military are used under strategic guidance to attain both military objectives and strategic effects.

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[23] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.91.

[24] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.92.

[25] Clausewitz, *On War*, pp.91-99 and in Book 8.

Strategy does not simply put military objectives in place and then leave the scene; it is there all the time when the best military measures are chosen to achieve the objectives; it patiently toughens their substance, acting as the 'grammar', for its logic.

J.C. Wylie reached another key understanding when he conceptualized the place of special or limited theories of land, air, sea, and peoples liberation wars in relation to a general theory of strategy which "should be able to provide a common and basic frame of references for the special talents of the soldier, the sailor, the airman, the politician, the economist, and the philosopher in theory [making] common efforts towards a common aim".[26]

The assumptions of each limited theory cannot function in all cases, and the selection between them or combining them in a specific mixture is a role of the strategist armed with higher "general" strategic theory. Wylie's general theoretical framework which accommodated the four types of special theories he mentioned is the theory of power control. It is the way of choosing between each arm or combining them, depending on the characters of each war and what each special theory may provide to reach the final desired outcome -- controlling the enemy.[27]

In the study of strategy, a *special* theory elaborates **the major utilities** of a specific arm which can then be fitted into a comprehensive military strategy. These utilities, as discussed by Wylie, have conditions and room for manoeuvre which vary from one war to another and even during a single war depending on the circumstances. This variation demonstrates the inadvisability of relying solely on a specific arm or a special theory, whether air power, space, cyber- intelligence or Special Forces, as the single pathway to operational and strategic success.

Another difference between general and special theories of strategy, which adds to the conditionality of special theories, is the way that assumptions on which they are based may change with **age** and **experience**.

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[26] J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (Annapolis: Naval institute Press 2014) p.89.

[27] Wylie, *Military Strategy*, p.138.

Special theories are vulnerable to technological and administrative developments which open the door to new special theories (for example of nuclear, space, cyber war and so on) or new utilities for the old theories in the strategic/upper operational sense (for example strategic bombings, aircraft carriers, nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, and the strategic air campaign in the 1990s).

Practice may also affect the evolution of special theory much more than general theory, whether the practice is in the past, the present or is anticipated for the future. An obvious example of this is the testing of Mahan's theory of decisive sea battle before and during WWI and its refinement by Corbett.[28] Douhet's theory of strategic air command and the ability of air power to achieve a decisive victory by strategic bombing which coerces the population was tested in WWI, and its refinement in the inter-war period was completed by Mitchell (American) and Trenchard (British) with their insights on "vital centres" as targets for morale bombing.[29]

The ordeal of WWI facilitated the birth of new operational theories (Russian deep operation, Fuller's operational paralysis and Hart's indirect approach)[30]. Looking at how Desert Storm tested Warden's idea about the strategic use of air campaigns, or the evolution of counter-insurgency theory, further strengthens understanding of the dynamic nature of special theory.[31]

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[28] The role of maritime power was explained by Alfred Mahan *in The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783*, (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007) and Julian Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Press, 2004). Mahan focused on the two major functions of controlling the sea and projecting power on land, advocating for a decisive sea battle. Corbett preferred strategic thinking over operational in dealing with sea power and maritime strategy and advocated objective sea control. Technological advances added many aspects to projecting sea power on land such as amphibious operations, carriers and nuclear submarines with ballistic warheads.

[29] Philip S. Meilinger, *Air War: Theory and Practice* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

[30] Shimon Naveh, In *Pursuit of Military Excellence*; Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[31] From the ideas of Sir Robert Thompson in *Defeating Communist Insurgencies: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, (New York: Praeger, 1966) on understanding how insurgency works through three stages (subversion, guerrilla and war of position) and its strategy of building public support and widening the ability

As the following chapters will show, the strategic utilities of major arms are almost always related to the type of war, the characteristics of the belligerents (political, military, geographical, technological and cultural), and the institutional capacity for self-learning. Special theories search for the conditions and assumptions governing these uses but their application remains fundamentally hugely contextual.

Generally, the major utilities of military means have been of three types: attaining **superiority** and free movement in its respective domain or helping the other arm to do that (air supremacy, sea control, and land manoeuvre); participating solely or in combination to attain the operational **military objectives** which were mostly on the ground; and participating directly in attaining the strategic effect as was the case with strategic bombing, blockade and political decapitation by Special Forces.

A clear demarcation line should be drawn between strategic logic – general and special – and another theoretical component: the doctrine. The detailed description of the functions, general trends and operational codes of air, land, sea or joint warfare for a specific strategic context, are the **doctrine**, or as defined in NATO documents, "the fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgement in application".[32]

Doctrine can be defined as strategic, operational and tactical depending on the level of war it deals with.

Strategic doctrine decides which type of war the armed forces need to prepare for. It is built on a set of strategic *assumptions* regarding: the enemy, strategic requirements for the military to achieve, regular or irregular or hybrid warfare, and the dimensions that affect the use of force strategically (geostrategy, culture, technology, economy, regime type). However, as Colin Gray commented the issue of

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to inflict damage in order to escalate to a war of positions or to break down the regime such as in the Malaya campaign. Also, a similar role was played by the Americans in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq which led to the birth of the COIN field manual.

[32] APP-6 (v) - NATO glossary terms and definitions.

having a "strategic" doctrine, strategic performance should not rely on a fixed formula, especially when the pace of change is fast. In strategy, what is overarching and constant is its logic and basic ideas which are transferred only by education, not indoctrination.[33]

At the levels of tactics, "how to do" and "best practice" is the rule and tactical knowledge/skill is easy to transfer and to train on. Geoffrey Sloan indicated two functions of the tactical doctrine: it enhances the tempo of operations, and it develops the ability of the army to produce what he called "transitory quality", which has strong operational effects and may facilitate the ability to pursue a strategic effect.[34] This quality is of great importance in wartime, or periods immediately preceded war, when a tactical blockage exists or is expected because of previous experience. However, for the transitory quality to build up operational or strategic effect, it needs an operational/strategic guidance to be exploited and not to exceed the culminating point of victory[35] in the political, operational or logistic senses.

Operational and upper operational doctrines aim also to instruct the army to improve its understanding and practice. They depend on theoretical assumptions on the use of combined or specific arms (special and operational theories). But they are shaped also by strategic assumptions of the forthcoming war mentioned above. This is the **higher ramification** for operational doctrine which is the responsibility of policy makers and strategists.[36]

The **lower ramification** of operational doctrines is the practical feedback from operational or collective tactical levels which constitutes best practice.

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[33] Colin Gray, *Strategy and Politics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016) pp.59-61. He basically echoed Clausewitz's famous idea that "Theory should be study, not doctrine", Clausewitz, *On War*, p.141.

[34] Geoffrey Sloan, "Military doctrine, command philosophy and the generation of fighting power: genesis and theory", *International Affairs*, Vol 88, 2012, pp. 243–263.

[35] Handel, *Masters of War,* pp. 170-174.

[36] ADP (Army Doctrines Publications) Land Operations, first published 2010, updated 2017.

Doctrine is the conceptual component of fighting power responsible for transforming general strategic assumptions/logic and the strategic forecast concerning forthcoming missions into a solid collection of ideas on how the army should train, equip itself, be commanded and work in accordance with best practice.

Hence, it is the laboratory in which general strategic theory, special theory, and operational best practice are engaged and distilled into ready materials for educating and training the operational and tactical cadres.[37]

Strategic Logic and the Dilemma of Operational Art

As armies became larger, weapons more lethal, communications (telegraph, then telephone and radio) faster and more immediate, and logistical lines longer and more complex, new challenges and opportunities were revealed. Neutralizing the enemy forces was now unachievable through a single battle but controlling large formations over long chains of operations became feasible. Hence, the conditions were established for developing and orchestrating cascades of battles, engagements and manoeuvres.

Historians nevertheless disagree about when this new operational thinking and practice emerged, and theorists also dispute the nature of operational art and whether it is useful. The author would argue that the first conflict of opinion was born out of the second.

If "operational" is taken to mean everything above battle and below strategy, then operational art has clearly appeared since the rise of Napoleon who mastered moving combined army corps formations along parallel pathways, using them, thanks to his innovative administrative approach, as "hammer and anvil" to annihilate the enemy in battle.[38] Similarly, von Moltke benefited from the development of railways which transferred large armies by unprecedented paths of space and time to achieve the same outcome of "single point strategy".[39] Also, the German Blitzkrieg, understood as waves of tactical high tempo breakthroughs, can be considered to have operational elements in terms of the required logistics, offensive doctrine, speed, combined arms, reach and exploitation.[40]

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[37] Harold Hoiback, *Understanding Military Doctrine: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2013) pp.15-21.

However, if we consider operational art as a specific conceptual and practical framework for exploiting tactical breakthroughs in depth, with tempo and reach -- in order to achieve moral or psychological shock, as perceived by J.C Fuller in the interwar period, or annihilation as perceived in "deep operation" theory by Tukhachuvesky in the same period --[41] then operational art was only made feasible by the practical issues faced during WWI and the emergent technological developments in air, armour, artillery and radio.

Western militaries were to a large extent blind to operational art up to the late 1970s, at least as a theoretical formulation. Interestingly, the new trend was catalysed by the events of the Arab-Israeli 1973 War, as Mann indicated, in addition to the lessons of the Vietnam War. [42] It started in the United States, which adopted active defence, and then in 1982 the concept of "air-land battle". In 1986, there was the first indication of "operational art". The British formulated their concept of "Manoeuvrist approach" in 1989 on similar grounds.[43]

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[38] Martin Van Creveld, "Napoleon and the Dawn of Operational Warfare" in Olsen and Creveld, *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp.9-35.

[39] David Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives: A Case Study in the Operational Level of War* (London: Routledge, 2006) pp.23-24. Dennis Showalter, "Prussian-German Operational Art, 1740-1943", in Olsen and Creveld, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, pp.38-44.

[40] Two versions on whether the Blitzkrieg was a tactical or an operational construct can be found in: Naveh, Search for Excellence; Zabecki, *1918 Campaigns*; Showalter, "Prussian-German Operational Art"; Jehuda Wallach, *The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation: The Theories of Clausewitz and Schlieffen and Their Impact on the German Conduct of Two World Wars (London: Greenwood Press, 1986).*

[41] Zabecki, *1918 Campaigns*, pp.11-40.

[42] Zabecki, *1918 Campaigns*, pp.11-40.

The real dilemma of operational art and level of war is multifocal:

Firstly, operational art may **ossify** over specific operational and strategic objectives. The version that was advanced by operational art advocates concentrated on neutralizing the enemy forces; some adopted annihilation and some adopted paralysis. But what if this target, as Clausewitz indicated, is not a necessity for winning a war or is unachievable? Also, as chapter six indicates, what if the military is to be used against irregular forces that do not have depth or regular defence lines and logistics, and military actions only represent no more than 20% of the actions needed to defeat the insurgency and had multiple operational objectives?[44] This is specifically what led Kelly and Brennan to go to the extreme in stating that operational art, by which they meant a specific formula of it, "devoured" strategy.[45]

What if the military target was first occupying a territory, then shifting to defence, as in the case of the 1973 War, or if the centre of gravity was outside the battlefield occupied by the enemy's major armed formations, such as the capital, the alliance, or any other target whose capture or destruction would cause what Clausewitz called a "political percussion"?

Secondly, the operational art may **ignore contextual variances** in geography, technology, culture and military balance which necessitate modification, adaptation and even invention. As indicated, the pre-WWII German reliance on human selection, the creation of a healthy and innovative command, made their tactical excellence a golden key to reaching operational supremacy, in contrast to the Red Army's social make-up, poor mechanisation and centralized command which required the development of the theory of deep operation.[46] Even in the Russian case, the events of the war showed how Svechin's claim that Russia should adopt an attrition strategy benefiting from swapping space for time was more important than Tukhachovisky's deep operation of annihilation.[47]

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[43] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, p.99.

[44] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (London:* Praeger Security International, 2006) p.63.

[45] Kelly and Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy*.

Thirdly, the operational art formula is mostly land operations based, with other arms secondary at best. However, this ignores the growing literature on operational practices, albeit in its infancy, in air and sea, not to mention Special Forces, cyber warfare and space. John Warden's writing on Planning and Air Combat that aims at attaining air supremacy first in order to move to wider offensive, defensive, interdiction and air support options that were proven in the Gulf War, was an example if its narrow concentration on a specific service is acknowledged.[48] Geoffrey Till described operational thinking in the naval dimension, where new concepts such as Operational Manoeuvre from the Sea (OMFS) and Ship to Objective Manoeuvre (STOM) were tried in practice in attempts to affect the course of campaigns.[49] Corbett and Mahan had much operational thinking linked to strategic utilities, as in sea control, sea denial, and exploitation (for blockade, offence and defence, naval diplomacy and maritime protection).[50] Nevertheless, as all recent doctrines have agreed, *jointness* is the essential concept behind modern warfare, and the operational theory that is restricted to one arm is self-defeating.

For the last points, chapter four on the 1973 War is especially illustrative on how operational art should be moulded to strategic guidance and contextual characters, and how military means (for instance, use of SAM for air-denial by the Egyptians, and Israeli armoured battalions and gunboats attacking SAMs to regain air supremacy) were compensated for and synergised by each other. Hence, operational art should be conceived as a very flexible form compliant to strategic requirement and compatible with contextual variances. Its aim is to orchestrate tactical actions in high tempo sequencing and/or accumulative patterns in order to achieve operational objectives, mostly tangible and quantifiable, which lead in turn to strategic effects related to the opponent's will-change.

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[46] Jacob Kipp, "Tsarist and Soviet Operational Art, 1853-1991", in Olsen and Creveld, pp.64-65.

[47] Alexander Svechin, *Strategy* (Minneapolis: East View Press, 1991); Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*; Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*.

[48] John A. Warden III, *Air Campaign: Planning for Combat* (Lincoln: iUniverse.com, 2000) p.15.

[49] Geoffrey Till*, Sea Power: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2013) pp.79-84.

[50] Ian Speller, *Understanding Naval Warfare* (London: Routledge, 2014) pp. 13-75.

Fourthly, the operational level is not a fixed level of command nor is it independent of **strategic guidance**. Because of the political requirements of isolating the military from politics, not policy, and the professionalization of military operations, operational thinking and practice require us to conceive of a level between tactics and strategy. Nevertheless, as the US doctrinal document of 2011 stated, the administrative structure of this level is specific and mission dependent.[51] Also, as e operational planning and execution serves specific strategic ends, it should be overseen by strategy, bearing in mind the previous remark on the fusionist character of levels of war.

To sum up, strategic logic is a set of principles that govern the utility of military, primarily in war, and non-military means to achieve policy aims by affecting the enemy's will. Strategy attempts to bridge operations to policy by formulating detailed ways of using the military means and shaping the operational art and capabilities.

Strategic logic, in its abstract form, should be the same for all types of wars. However, its contextualization varies according to the age, type of war, and specific strategic context. The next question concerns the continuity and variation of strategic logic in irregular wars.

Strategic Logic in Irregular Wars

Terminology Ordeal

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[51] ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operation*, October 2011, p.9.

The range of terminology for this type of war is endless, although there has usually been a predominant term in each period: “small wars” during the colonial period, “revolutionary war” after WWII, “low intensity wars” in the 1970s and “asymmetric war”, “irregular war” and “hybrid wars” after 1989. Guerrilla warfare, terrorism, humanitarian and peace operations, and organised crime have also been terms widely used.

If the moral and legal factors are acknowledged, the picture becomes even more complicated, as those who are considered terrorists, insurgents, or “no-hopers” by one side may be considered resistance and freedom fighters by another. In such conflicts, more than other wars, the terminology is a part of the protracted battle over the narratives, and the awareness of the belligerents and wider public opinion.[52]

The main focus in this thesis is on the strategic level, but other levels should be delineated in order to explain it. Politically speaking, an irregular war may be said to occur when one of the two belligerents is a non-state actor. From a strategic point of view, irregulars do not have direct access to state military and non-military means, including domestic and international legitimacy; hence they aim primarily to run a conflict in order to enrich themselves with a part of these means in order to be able to bleed the regular and stronger opponent for political concessions. Irregularity in the operational and tactical senses is identical to guerrilla warfare.

Asymmetry can be an empty term if it means confronting strategies in details as, in order to succeed, any strategy should be asymmetric to the opponent’s and not merely its mirror image[53], but it may be a useful term if taken to mean a different “type” of strategy where a military victory is not the main intermediary strategic goal; hence those strategies of regular actors, such as Fabian strategy, could be asymmetric too.[54] In the case of irregular wars, there is asymmetry also in the need for military victory as a prerequisite for winning or, as Gray explains, "Insurgents can lose the warfare, but still win the war. In contrast, if the political incumbents lose the warfare, they lose the war."[55]

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[52] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, p.132; Thompson, *War from the Ground Up*; Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1992) pp. 10-15.

[53] Robert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books 2008) pp.3-5.

Guerrilla warfare is a tactical and operational way of fighting, not a strategy, which can be adopted by both regular Special Forces, and irregular forces to fight regular forces by using small formations without a formal logistical system in order to harass the opponent, or by attacking highly valuable objects, but not holding territories or keeping formidable defensive lines.

Terrorism is a tactical and operational method of attacking civilians by non-state actors to produce terror for a political purpose. It can also be a strategy if it is the sole means in the arsenal of the non-state actor.[56] Terrorism uses "signalling" such as killing a domestic opponent, to achieve either operational or strategic objectives, rarely tactical. Operationally, it usually aims at gaining legitimacy, enhancing recruitment, or attracting the government's harsh response for the previous purposes.

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[54] Fabian strategy was used by the Roman general Fabius Maximus to bleed and exhaust Hannibal's Carthaginian army by avoiding confrontation. A similar strategy was used by Saladin against Richard I of England after the defeat of Arsuf, till the latter was exhausted and had to accept negotiations in order to travel back to deal with domestic instability. Thomas Mahnken explains the strategies that a weak state can follow to win over a stronger one in "Why the Weak Win: Strong Powers, Weak Powers and the Logic of Strategy" in Bradford Lee and Karl Walling, *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality,* pp. 60-74.

[55] Colin S. Gray, "Concept Failure: COIN, Counterinsurgency and Strategic Theory", *Prism* **3**, No. 3 (June 2012), pp.17-32.

[56] Peter Neumann and M.L.R Smith, *The Strategy of Terrorism: How it Works, and Why it Fails* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008).

At a more strategic level, it may aim to disorient the regime and society to lay the ground for a revolutionary option[57], to send a message of strategic and military resilience (especially by suicide attacks)[58] or to force a political compromise.

This study does not delegitimize the term of "state terrorism"[59], which could be reasonable both legally and politically, but does not see its utility in describing strategy.

Notwithstanding these explanations, it has to be acknowledged that these terms were always arbitrary and hence they were generally accepted provided that they conveyed a clear concept to the audience, and that especially for our purposes they do not confuse strategy with operations and tactics or the ends with the means; nor should they mingle legal and moral claims within the strategic analysis apart from examining how both sides mobilized such claims. Also, this neologism should be restricted to the essentials; otherwise, as Gray warned, "the plethora of adjectivally modified concepts of contemporary war and warfare has driven older and simpler concepts and theory almost into hiding."[60] Hence, a proper theoretical insight is needed.

The Evolution of Theory

Practice in this area preceded theorizing, whether in the historical tribal wars against formidable colonial formations, or what Clausewitz called "Peoples in Arms" in Book Six of "On War" after experiencing the Spanish "guerrillas" (little war)[61] against Napoleon which were part of a regular coalition strategy.[62] This was followed in the 19th century by theorizing on political subversion and terrorism as part of revolutionary strategy, and was extended at the turn of the century by Lenin's writings.[63] Callwell also discussed "small war"[64] which he said required different formations and tactics from the imperial army but would still be decided by tactical victories. Early French advocated a "civilian centric approach" to win over the hearts and minds of the domestic population with a nationalist spirit in order to defeat the insurgents militarily and politically[65], as the US "small war" doctrine of 1940 proposed.[66]

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[57] Neuman and Smith, *The Strategy of Terrorism*, pp.31-56.

[58] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "IEDs, Martyrs, Civil Wars and Terrorists" in Kennedy-Pipe et al, Terrorism and Political Violence (London: SAGE Publishing, 2015), p.160.

[59] Richard Jackson, Eamon Murphy, Scott Poynting (eds), *Contemporary State Terrorism: Theory and Practice*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

[60] Gray, "Concept Failure" in *Prism* 3.

[61] Clausewitz, *On War*, pp.480-482.

However, four treatises, two by proponents of insurgency and two by opponents, paved the way for a better and more modern, understanding of this type of war. On the insurgency side were Chairman Mao's writings, especially "On Guerrilla War" and "On Protracted War", and Che Guevara's "Guerrilla Warfare". On the opponents' side were David Galula's "Counterinsurgency Warfare" and Sir Robert Thompson's "Defeating Communist Insurgency".[67]

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[62] Charles Esdaile, "Britain and the Napoleonic Wars" in John Andreas Olsen and Colin S. Gray (eds), *The Practice of Strategy: from Alexander the Great to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Handel found a strong link between Clausewitz' variables for people in armed wars fighting inside the country, in a large space, not decided by a single strike, dependent on the national character and the rough and inaccessible terrain, and Mao's theory. Handel, *Masters of War*, pp.90-102.

[63] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, p.134.

[64] Sir Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: their Principles and Practice* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

[65] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, pp.138-139.

[66] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, pp.138-139.

[67] Mao Zedong and John Waldron (Intro), *Mao on Warfare: On Guerrilla War, On Protracted War and other Military Writings* (Beijing: CN Times, 2013); Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (La Vergne, Tennessee: BN Publishing, 2012); Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgencies: the Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 1966); David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and practice* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2006).

These treatises, interestingly, highlight two points in common: there are specific principles in these wars which may be different to those in regular wars, and these principles themselves should be applied differently accordingly to different contexts. All these works acknowledged the complexity of theorizing and the hard journey from theory to practice.

Both Mao and Guevara envisioned irregular wars as protracted conflict in which the socialist movement initially uses subversion and terrorism to delegitimize the government and weaken its rule while expanding the insurgency movement's political and military power. Guerrilla warfare is then adopted to bleed the government and enrich the movement's ability, leading to the last stage in which a war of position decides the outcome militarily. Both acknowledged that the means to avoid defeat and reach victory is for the insurgents to live among the population like "a fish swims in the sea", enabling them to recruit, hide, and mobilize.

However, Guevara adopted two modifications in line with Latin America's isolated topography and weak central governments: military force can be used from the start by establishing "foci" from which the guerrilla bands expand gradually. Contrary to Mao, he said this stage need not be deferred until the political campaign provides the means for the movement to survive. Also, the movement may not reach the final stage of a war of position as the collapse of a weak government may be catalysed earlier by guerrilla warfare.

Thompson and Galula had personal experiences which informed their theories: Malaya and Vietnam for the former, and Algeria for the latter. Thompson faced the Maoist version of irregular war and Galula faced a modification of Guevara's version, which he called the "bourgeois-nationalist form" that launches terrorism and subversion earlier in its campaign.[68]

Both acknowledged the basic principles in counter-insurgency: that the population is the centre of gravity and should be segregated and protected from insurgents, the necessity for political supremacy over military means to keep its use conservative, building viable and functioning governance to win hearts and minds, and the priority of destroying not only the enemy's military forces but their political cells and public support. Both Thompson and Galula adopted the strategic phases of clearing, holding, winning (establishing governance) and won (neutralizing and tracing the remnants); to be implemented in a specific area and then to move to another. [69]

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[68] Galula, *Counterinsurgency,* pp.39-41.

However, each had an area of emphasis and scope arising from his experience. Thompson highlighted the need for clear political aims, given the dilemma of a foreign force aiming to create and assist a pro-nationalist government, and the establishing of secured hamlets in rural areas of Malaya and Vietnam.[70]

Galula, writing from experience gained within an inhabiting occupation, focussed on: establishing political structure and organisations, not merely functioning governance, seniority of civilian and regional commands, and the transformation required for military forces and doctrine to fulfil these tasks, with an emphasis on infantry and tactical air-support formations. When facing regular elements he said more direct and overwhelming force should be applied.[71]

After the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, the United States and its allies found themselves facing a situation where swift regular victories were followed by protracted and bloody irregular wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The strategic literature was re-examined in order to answer the new challenges and benefited from what was called the "cultural turn".[72] Based on Galula's study, with some acknowledgment of Thompson's, the US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual adopted the principles described above in an operationalized manner and praised the use of anthropological works to decode local cultures and structures for a better approach.[73] The British counterinsurgency doctrine also developed in a similar way.[74]

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[69] Galula, *Counterinsurgency,* pp.61-74; Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgencies,* pp.50-63.

[70] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgencies*, pp.121-141.

[71] Galula, *Counterinsurgency,* pp.65-66.

[72] Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern Wars Through Western Eyes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

A trend of iconizing counterinsurgency and raising it to the level of a distinctive type of war which needs a specific formula, strategy, civil-military relations, force structure and tactics has invaded the strategic literature during the last decade. While some adopted an approach focusing on reviving the classic rules in counterinsurgency, whether commending or discrediting the British way of doing it,[75] others emphasised the distinctiveness of the current terroristic insurgency which is globalised and enriched by information networks and jihadist ideology.[76]

A critical school soon emerged around three components. The first, "enemy-centric", was a denial of the specificity of counterinsurgency and similar conflicts; they are, it was argued, simply another war and need to be decided, like all wars, by tactical victories rather than by restricting the military power by a formula of winning hearts and minds.[77]

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[73] The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual by John A. Nagl, James F. Amos, Sarah Sewall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). See also James Corum, "Rethinking US Army Counter-Insurgency Doctrine", in Tim Benbow and Rod Thornton (eds), *Dimensions of Counter-insurgency: Applying Experience to Practice* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2008) pp. 121-138.

[74] British Army Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*, Army Code 71876, October 2009.

[75] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002) emphasised the successful British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya and attributed it to the learning capability of its military. Andrew Mumford, *The Counterinsurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular Warfare* (London: Routledge, *2014)*, while acknowledging the general success of British counterinsurgency campaigns in Malaya, Kenya and Northern Ireland, denied that the British army could be considered a learning institution seeing that the British success was a combination of political compromises and painstaking trial and error.

[76] John Nagel and Brian Burton, "Thinking Globally and Acting Locally: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Modern War- A Reply to Smith and Jones", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol **33,** no. 1 (February 2010). D. Jones and M. Smith, "Whose Hearts and Whose Minds? The Curious Case of Global Counterinsurgency", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol 33 no. 1 (February 2010).

Another view, represented by Porch, suggested that even successful counterinsurgency campaigns have rarely abided by the "golden principles" of counterinsurgency (winning hearts and minds and a restrained use of force) and indicated instead that tactical innovations such as small troop tactics and flexible force structure with Special Operations and tactical air support, are achievable by any competent military institution regardless of any doctrine of counterinsurgency. However, Porch also acknowledged current legal and political constraints, both domestically and internationally, on winning counterinsurgency campaigns, and suggests that they are better respected.[78]

A third component was critical of raising a specific formula (based on the experience of an individual case) to the level of a fixed strategy which would then be considered a panacea. Hew Strachan explicitly criticized the vacuum of policy and strategy in both the Afghanistan and the Iraq wars and he considered counterinsurgency not as a strategy in itself but as an operation that should meticulously serve a specific strategy for specific political aims.[79] Colin Gray was also critical of wars in which sophisticated strategy-making was reduced to a specific formula. He was sceptical that viable policy ends could be achieved in the long run in these wars by any strategy given the structural preferences and characteristics of the American military.[80]

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[77] See Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency* (New York: New Press, 2013). William F. Owen, "Killing Your Way to Control", *The British Army Review*, 151, Spring 2011, pp. 34-37.

[78] Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

[79] Hew Strachan, *Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[80] Colin Gray, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt*? (Carlisle, Penn: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006).

The complexities that are found here can be rooted in both the theoretical and practical spheres.

Theoretically, counterinsurgency theory was almost victim to the conceptual deficits which are addressed earlier in this study: confusion over levels of theory and levels of war.

Theoretical principles in strategy are eternal in any war if dealing with general theory. However, a group of wars has usually been categorised as a result of periodic changes in socio-political or technological settings; hence it was Clausewitz's emphasis that each age has its own war. When contextualizing theory further to a specific war or conflict, more differentiation is apparent. As Gray indicated, at the supreme general level there is a Strategy, but there are different strategies working in different wars.[81] The best way to describe this descending cascade in theorizing on strategy, and in this kind of war specifically, is summarized in Mao's maxim:

> The laws of war are a problem that anyone directing a war must study and solve. The laws of revolutionary war are a problem that anyone directing a revolutionary war must study and solve. The laws of China's revolutionary war are a problem that anyone directing China's revolutionary war must study and solve.[82]

Brett Friedman cleverly touched the heart of the subject: both the "enemy-centric" and the "population centric" school adopted a solid strategic formula that perceived the centre of gravity in a mechanical way, although it is a dynamic and could be a multidimensional concept when applied to different cases.[83]

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[81] Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[82] Mao Zedong, *Mao on Warfare,* p.1.

[83] Captain Brett Friedman, "Creeping Death: Clausewitz and Comprehensive Counterinsurgency", *Military Review* January-February 2014, pp.82-89.

The other theoretical problem is related to the levels and utility of war. Strachan was right when he spoke of the current void in Western policy and strategy, and that many of the counterinsurgency formulae, as laid out, for example, in the British Army Field Manual, lie in the operational, even tactical and technical levels.[84] But his claim that counterinsurgency is merely an operational concept and not a strategy, is not totally accurate.

Post September 11, wars were devoid of clear and achievable aims, and no dedicated strategies were looked at thoroughly and this was obvious in the extreme changes in strategy in Afghanistan, shifting from regime decapitation to a proxy war to destroy the Taliban regime to counterinsurgency and nation building after 2006.[85] However, if counterinsurgency is adopted as a strategic means to specific political aims its layout is a part of the strategy making. The problem in these wars has not been that counterinsurgency has been raised to the level of strategy but that there was no viable policy aim in accordance with which a viable strategy could incorporate counterinsurgency, whether as a main or secondary effort.

In practice, as Tuck indicated, even if counterinsurgency strategic and operational principles are acknowledged as important they are difficult to implement. Many analysts have shown the institutional and cultural complexities which face the military in adapting to these wars with different measures of success, different force structure and tactical methods, restricted use of force, and heterogeneous means in which the military does not represent the larger proportion.[86] Even if lessons were there, institutional amnesia concerning this kind of war remains unpopular within the military, as in the case of the US military when the lessons of Vietnam were lost after Gulf War I.[87]

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[84] Strachan, *Direction of War,* pp.215-220.

[85] Antulio Echevarria II, "After Afghanistan: Lessons for NATO's Future Wars", *RUSI Journal,* Vol. 159, Jun 2014, No. 3, pp. 20-23.

[86] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare,* pp.149-154.

[87] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare,* pp.149-150.

In conclusion, , the theoretical confusion has originated from missing how general strategic logic may be contextualized in specific forms of war to lead to a specific strategic theory that should guide the adopted strategies in a particular case. This will be apparent in the case of the PLO discussed later in this chapter.

Strategic Logic Emphasised

The primary feature of an irregular war is that it is a war, and war is in essence a ***duel.*** Polarity, as it was called by Emile Thompson, is the basic nature of war. [88] If this polarity is absent, then it is a conflict other than war, where force is utilised for destruction and to create pervasive conditions for policy.

The second feature in irregular war is that it is ***irregular***. There is a non-state actor fighting a mighty state actor, domestic or foreign, for total or partial dominance over a political domain. However, as the balance of power is hugely against it, the irregular movement formulates a strategy with two directives: to bleed its enemy in order to challenge its political will, and to use the war and its dynamism to enhance its own capabilities.

It needs the **population** for its essential tasks and outcome in order to survive, hide, recruit and win acceptance of its political legitimacy and deprive the government of political legitimacy.[89] It uses all means possible: political propaganda directed to all sides, external patronage for support, intelligence and terrorist actions, guerrilla methods when appropriate and, later, more regular military methods for attacking government capacity and enhancing the **psychological feeling** that victory is unachievable without high losses to the government. If the government wants to use brute force, it will not find any organised and obvious formations to use it on (since the irregular forces are within the people as fish are within the sea); only the people against whom the use of force only produces grievances which can be helpful for the insurgency to utilize.

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[88] Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty First Century Combat as Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press/Hurst, 2012).

[89] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare,* p.20.

The population here is the centre of gravity target for strategic effect. However, as Friedman indicated, it is not the **only** centre of gravity if the latter was interpreted as the hub the opponent's trinity relied upon.[90] The centre of gravity is *mostly* the population in this type of conflict, but it could also be the irregular military capabilities, external support, incendiary ideology or local domestic population all together with flexible proportionality that varies between conflicts and between the phases of the same conflict.

No fixed formula is offered as every context has its own character and proportionalities, but the end result is to modify the opponent's political will.[91]

From the counterinsurgency perspective, the government needs to achieve a political stability which the insurgent movement seems to threaten or stand against. In order to neutralize it, the government needs to attack the insurgency's **capabilities:** its political cause by alleviating grievances, offering the population a better life, and a popular narrative to inspire it instead of the insurgents' narrative; the leadership, structure, recruitment ability and propaganda by combined intelligence and security methods and propaganda; its military power by mixed offensive and defensive operations, and its external support by diplomacy, intelligence and military fencing. The **population here also is the centre of gravity of the enemy, with the insurgents as a target for the strategic effect.**

Can this kind of war be characterised as either a total or a limited war as our proposed model suggests? It can be total or limited for both sides depending on the context, the balance of power and resolve between the two sides, and the nature of the end status acceptable for both sides.

Insurgency usually has total aims, for example overthrowing the government, but it may content itself, either by design or as the conflict goes on, with limited geographical dominance or power sharing. Counterinsurgency starts almost with total aims also, but it may concede to geographical concessions, sharing power or, in the case of foreign occupation, a scheduled departure with or without post-conflict political conditions.

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[90] Brett Friedman, "Creeping Death: Clausewitz and Comprehensive Counterinsurgency", *Military Review,* Vol 94, No. 1, Jan-Feb 2014.

[91] Friedman, *"Creeping Death".*

To sum up, strategic logic in irregular wars is not different from general strategic logic in the abstract, using force and other means in a duel to achieve a political end state by overcoming the opposing will in a reasonable means-ways-end. But because of the peculiarities mentioned, it has more specific characteristics: the population is generally the centre of gravity but other centres of gravity may exist also, for insurgency is a bleeding strategy while building its own capacity, and for counterinsurgency it is a combined strategy to deprive the insurgency of its cause, and the chance to survive and build itself. Any further concepts and dimensions in insurgency and counterinsurgency strategies and operations are **contextual** and it is hazardous to raise the lessons of a specific case to the level of theory.

For example, the principle has been outlined above that the population is the centre of gravity and that it should therefore be isolated from the insurgency and made submissive, if not supportive, to the government. ***Winning hearts and minds*** has been described as the essence of counterinsurgency. However, as Tuck indicated, if the insurgency is weak in cause and capability, and with limited support, or the public base for insurgency is alien to the general population, or it cannot be accommodated by the government, and the media coverage is censored and the state does not care about a legal and moral code of practice, the insurgency can be crushed militarily and its public base expelled or humiliated as was the case of the successful counterinsurgency in Chechnya and East Turkestan.[92]

As shown below, Israel winning and losing in irregular wars was not merely a result of the balance of power, which was always massively in her favour, but was due to the strategic ability of each side to **perceive** the strategic logic, general and specific, and behave strategically in a competent **institutional** and **practical** manner. However, there was no one single winning strategic formula as strategies were very dependent on contexts that create facilitating or obstructing conditions for both insurgency and counterinsurgency. The more able side was the one which was sensitive to these contextual conditions and adapted its strategy in accordance to them. There is no fixed operational art or tactical method in this type of war but as a rule they should follow strategic insight.

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[92] Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare*, pp.151-152.

Strategic performance in these wars should not be a victim of excessive ***specification*** that reduces strategy to a solid formula depending on historical or recent practices while neglecting basic strategic theory, nor of excessive ***generalization*** that ignores the characteristic features of irregular wars, which require special consideration of strategic logic and its practicalities in operational art, force structures and measures of success.

CHAPTER THREE

The Arab-Israeli *Regular* Wars, *I*

1948 War

1967 War (Southern Front)

THE 1948 WAR

Going to War

Once the partition plan was endorsed by the UN on 17 November 1947, authorising the partition of Palestine into two states, -- one for the Arabs with 45% of mandated Palestine land and one for the Jews with 53% – with Jerusalem under international control, Palestine was plunged into violence and chaos.

Inter-communal war erupted in December 1947 and continued until May 1948. In the first stage from December till March, the Jews were in defensive mode or "aggressive defence" as Ben-Gurion called it.[1] Arab forces failed to occupy the Jewish settlements but succeeded in cutting the main roads, especially the Tel Aviv - Jerusalem corridor, in spite of attempts by Haganah to keep the roads open by a "convoy war" in which home-made trucks guarded by armed small contingents aimed to open the blocked roads.

In the second stage (April and May 1948) the Haganah went on the offensive after completing military preparations and repulsing a disorganised Arab offensive.

In April 1948 the Haganah HQ secured the permission of the political leadership to adopt and apply Plan D, *Dalet*. This had three goals: strengthening the defences of settlements, securing the borders of the Jewish state as outlined in the UN resolution (except for Jerusalem which was to be included in the new state) and, finally, the most controversial goal: occupying critical points which could form bases for enemy attacks. The end result was more than 700,000 refugees. [2]

Before May 1948 barely any sign can be found of concrete action by Arab states to support going to war apart from the traditional rhetoric at consecutive Arab League meetings, particularly at Alia (Lebanon) in October 1947 and Cairo in December 1947 when decisions were taken to support the irregular military action in Palestine and prepare for collective regular action if this failed.

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[1] David Tal, *War in Palestine 1948: Strategy and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge 2004) p. 61.

[2] Ilan Pappe', *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2014) pp. 87-102; Benny Morris, *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009) pp.116-120.

Arab states suffered from three major structural issues which aborted serious preparation for war: social and political instability in Egypt, Iraq and Syria, the question of national independence in Egypt and Iraq, and malignant inter-Arab relations especially between the Hashemites in Jordan and Iraq and the anti-Hashemite in Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

The issue of Palestine aggravated these tensions and precluded healthy coalition formation. The reasons and manifestations of coalition failures will be discussed in the practical strategy section below, but the outline of the situation of the belligerent Arab states which follows will give an understanding of their structural problems.

The Israeli Strategic Ability (Ben-Gurion's Legacy)

Israeli strategy-making during the1948 War and the preceding years centred on David Ben-Gurion who had high standards of conceptual and institutional abilities.

Conceptual

Ben-Gurion's war diaries[3] show that he was certainly familiar with components of strategic logic and specially its institutional requirements. Although he had sketchy military experience during WWI, he was a heavy and encyclopaedic reader with a library of 12,000 books, including many volumes on military history. [4]

His main struggle in 1947 was to transform Haganah from a paramilitary organization into a professional army able to win the war with the locals, and confront an Arab invasion. He always looked for the relationship between tactical and operational engagements, the requirements for achieving political aims, and the general course of events.

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[3] David Ben-Gurion, *War Diaries: 1947-1949*, edited by Gershon Rivlin and Elhanan Orren (Arabic translation – Beirut: Institute of Palestinian Studies, 1993).

[4] Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statemen and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Free Press, 2003) p.155.

Ben-Gurion was deeply convinced that 1948 War should be decided by force and all other means should serve the military operations, and the target of the war should be controlling as much terrain as possible to enhance Israel's political and strategic position after the war.[5]

However, he did not aim to use military force and victories to modify the Arabs' political will to create a more stable post-war political landscape. Was this a sign of conceptual inefficiency in looking at war and strategy? This is a possibility. However, his attitude was more a result of his ideological views and his perception of the nature of the Arabs whom he believed could not be accommodated within the political agenda he wanted. His idea of the "indefinite battle" between Arabs and Jews is indicative of this.[6]

Nevertheless he showed some awareness of the political sensitivities of military actions. Many tactical or operational moves were shaped or even called off because of expected or actual negative political effects.[7]

In reply to Yigal Yadin's argument that "matters of war are separated into two parts: one part strategic decisions, the highest politics of war, but the army has the second part – the actual operational part… Tell me what to do not how to do it", Ben-Gurion explained that he had the authority to examine all the details concerning the war because war matters are connected, and the military were not wholly obedient to his orders. [8]

He fought frustrating battles to unify the various military forces and the political leadership and to keep absolute political supremacy, as he saw unity as an essential requirement of policy and strategy making.[9] He also had the flexibility to modify the command system to maintain unity and adapt to the unfolding strategic, operational and technological realities. [10] Crucial to his success was his ability to articulate, defend and circulate the thinking behind his moves in private and public.

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[5] Tal, *War in Palestine 1948,* pp.76-86 &p.351 ; Ben-Gurion, *War Diaries,* p.361 & 414.

[6] Michael Handel, "The evolution of Israeli strategy: the psychology of insecurity and the quest of absolute security", in Williamson Murray et al, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994).

[7] Look for example at his decisions on important issues such as not occupying the West Bank to keep the Iraqi front silent and pulling back the Horev operation from Sinai. See also specific decisions such as taming the intensity of indiscriminate Jewish attacks in the early communal war so not to alienate the locals.

[8] Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. 194.

Ben-Gurion had a genuine interest in upgrading the conceptual base of the IDF as shown by his early battles with Haganah's leadership to introduce formal military education for company commanders and above. [11] This is also evident in his harsh statement -- which was neglected by his following supreme commanders -- that "The most dangerous enemy to Israel's security is the intellectual inertia of those who are responsible for security."[12]

This marks Israel's conceptual ability as generally high.

Institutional

Israeli practice was institutionalized to a high grade considering the limitations of the period, and it demonstrated maturity at all levels: political, grand strategic, military strategic and below.

As a political leadership with a wide democratic base, the Jewish Agency enjoyed the legitimacy and influence, at least among the majority of the Yishuv population, required for state building and mobilization.

Ben-Gurion used the platform of marathon meetings to discuss the important issues and increase his awareness of minute details, building trust and enhancing the atmosphere of free and critical debate with the Haganah was familiar since before the war.

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[9] Eliot Cohen*, Supreme Command,* pp.133-170; Pappe', *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp.52-55.

[10] This includes the preliminary steps of unifying and maturing the Hagana HQ and support arms in 1974, side-lining the transitional layer between him and the military represented in Galilee and developing the area and task forces commands.

[11] David Ben-Gurion, *When Israel Fought in Battle* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1950, Hebrew), quoted in Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. 200.

[12] Ben-Gurion, *When Israel Fought in Battle,* p. 200.

But he still kept the line of command clear. A critical example of this was the "seminar" he led in March-May 1947 at which he personally questioned Haganah members of all ranks on all details of thought: command and control, training and education, materiel and planning. He thus built a clear image of the Haganah's actual abilities and internal environment. This information sharing, which he would use to formulate defence policy and strategy, won the trust of the Haganah High Command by showing his willingness and ability to grasp the full picture of the Haganah's situation and capacities. [13]

Ben-Gurion's principal conviction, to the point of obsession,[14] was the achievement of real and total political control over the military and using it freely as an instrument of policy.[15]

He faced three main problems in this sphere:

The first was to emphasise his full authority with regard to strategic command. In 1947, the Haganah was headed by a National Command composed of representatives of various political parties headed by Israel Galilee, a military headquarter (HQ) headed by the Chief of Staff Yaacov Dori, and Ben-Gurion at the top as head of the Defence Department in the executive Jewish Agency. By the end of the year with the thrust to transform Yishuv institutions into a state, Ben-Gurion established a defence portfolio in the new cabinet, and a smaller war cabinet, similar to the British model from WWI. This was opposed strongly but in vain by Galilee and Haganah HQ.[16] Even then, Ben-Gurion attempted to dissolve the position of the head of National Command as he saw it as an insulating layer between himself and the military rather than a bridge. He tried to fire Galilee at the beginning of war, giving the failure of the convoys as his reason. Faced with strong opposition from the cabinet and military he threatened to resign and got his way with a marginal compromise that allowed Galilee to stay but with no real authority.[17]

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[13] Cohen, *Supreme Command;* pp.133-150; Tal, *The War in Palestine 1948,* pp.24-28.

[14] He was easily irritated by an article written by Yitzhak Sadeh in 1947 challenging Ben-Gurion's request for absolute obedience to the Haganah. He then marginalized Sadeh despite the latter's legacy as the founder of Palmach. Sadeh was only permitted to lead the newly formed 8th brigade in the middle of the war but no more than that, Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p.166.

[15] Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington: US Institute of Peace Press, 2006) pp. 23-25.

[16] Pappe', *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict,* pp.51-52.

The second problem was to include the dissident and terrorist groups (IZL and Lehi) in the IDF which involved the very bloody confrontation of the *Altlena*[18] incident in June 1948.

The third issue was dissolving Palmach (Haganah's elite and independent Special Forces) and incorporating it entirely in the IDF. Ben-Gurion took a gradualist approach, forcing it to accept his political and strategic rule by May 1948, and dissolving its general command under Yigal Allon, the southern front commander. Ben-Gurion finally dissolved the force after a series of power struggles in January 1949.[19]

His attitude to the Palmach was motivated by two factors: his antipathy to exclusive military domains within the IDF, and the politicization of its senior cadres, most of whom were linked to Ahdut HaAvoda, the major component of the leftist political party Mapam.[20] Even after the war, he kept Palmach commanders away from the position of COS until his resignation when Yitzhak Rabin, Palmach's former chief of operations, was selected by Eshkol, his successor as PM. [21]

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[17] Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. 194-195.

[18] In August an Irgun's cargo ship, *Atalena*, approached Tel Aviv from France with some volunteers and weapons in violation of a ceasefire. Ben-Gurion ordered the Irgun to hand the ship's contents to the IDF HQ but it refused. Two Palmach battalions were ordered to seize the ship which had boarded, and after military skirmishes 14 people were killed. After that, all the members of the Irgun were dispersed among the wider IDF forces. Lehi was outlawed in September after he admitted responsibility for assassinating Count Bernadotte. Pappe', *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 162-163; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 81.

[19] Cohen, *The Supreme Command*, pp.193-194.

[20] Pappe', *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* p. 49.

Ben-Gurion was sensitive to the frictions in his relations with the military and war cabinet, and he could detect when to stop and not push too far, either by abandoning his proposal[22], altering it or achieving it in stages, or when to push ahead and accept an amount of friction, depending on how critical he felt his proposal was for the higher political or strategic leadership of the war.

He adopted compromises and middle-way policies on other issues. He was always very critical of the Haganah's spirit and command ethos and preferred more intellectual British-minded commanders and formal military discipline. As the Haganah HQ became hostile in 1947 to his proposal of employing British and other western veterans in high command such as Haim Laskov, a former commander of the British-affiliated Jewish Legion he insisted on using them for planning and education.

Although there was no institution bridging the military and political layers in order to articulate strategic formulae in a balanced means-way-ends, Ben-Gurion himself had the determination to take up this burden and lead the discussions in both camps, in the cabinet and HQ, by representing the other side of the strategic bridge in these discussions.

Ben-Gurion enforced model of control by all means, but it was far from the absolute control claimed by Cohen.[23] He managed a high degree of delegation of operational and tactical issues which sometimes went against his strategic considerations to the extent that he had to modify them.[24]

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[21] Ami Glusca, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War: Government, Armed Forces and Defence Policy 1963-1967* (London: Routledge, 2007) p. 19.

[22] As was in the case of abandoning his proposal after the second truce to occupy East Jerusalem until the Jordan River in front of the cabinet's fierce opposition.

[23] Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p.165-170.

All relational and functional parameters of the institutional strategic ability (information sharing, critical assessment, and formidable position of Military) were played out almost perfectly with a slight weakness in clear authorization and strategic intervention of politicians. This marks Israel's institutional ability very high.

Practical

Israeli **policy** was clear enough at any single point in time, but it had multiple ceilings. The highest was set by ideological imperatives, but the adopted policy at any point was based on strategic calculations, albeit shaped by rigid assumptions.

At the Baltimore conference in 1942, the policy of the Jewish Agency (JA) was formalized along with its takeover of supreme policy-making from the World Zionist Organisation (WZO). Policy was set as "establishing a Jewish state in the whole of mandated Palestine".[25]

Nevertheless, the JA clearly accepted the UN partition plan, apart from the international governance of Jerusalem, and stated its contentment with the apportioning of land and the detailed areas allotted to the proposed Jewish state - the heavily populated Jewish central section on the coast and Sharon area, the fertile eastern and western Galilee; and the Negev with its pathway to the Red Sea and potential capacity to accommodate huge immigration waves.

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[24] For example, in the case of Operation Yoav in the Negev region, the actual plan from the IDF HQ did not permit a thrust towards the base of Egyptian forces in Al-Arish which would involve crossing the Egyptian international border but sanctioned a thrust at the Auja-Rafah corridor. The Southern Commander Allon, however adopted the former approach. After the political turmoil that resulted, Allon refused for a while the orders of Yigael Yadin to turn back. Ben-Gurion ordered to cancel the thrust into Al-Arish, but did not blame Allon. He even ordered the latter to occupy Al-Qusayma south at the border to secure the road to Eilat.Tal, *War in Palestine 1948*, p.448.

[25] Ritchie Ovendale, *The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars* (London: Routledge, 2004) pp. 85-87.

However, when the war erupted and the Israelis withstood the ordeal of the early days before the first truce, Ben-Gurion raised the level of policy ends to match what he could achieve militarily.

Grand Strategy

Ben-Gurion envisioned that his **policy of the greatest possible territorial expansion besides preserving the political legitimacy of the state** would have to be ***imposed*** on the ground. And because the sole means to achieve such a grand strategy is military, the scale of this policy is tied by what the military means could achieve, with other available means mostly serving it.

The major pitfall in such a strategy is that the enemy does not have a vote in the political conclusion. The enemy could not be accommodated within the expansionist policy, but his will had not been destroyed decisively in a total war.

But was Ben-Gurion right to assume that the war of 1948 was not resolvable, taking into account the apparent Arab position? The Arab states did not accept the UN Resolution on Palestine, and apart from Abdullah, they rejected also Bernadotte's scheme for bringing the conflict to an end. They supported the irregular war in Palestine, and then launched an invasion from four directions to avert the implementation of Partition by force. They openly rejected until the end any peaceful conclusion.

First, we may point to the half-hearted political "will" in support of invasion and the flaring up of inter-state rivalry during its execution. Crucially, the actual deployment of Egyptian, Jordanian and Iraqi forces aimed to stay inside the Arab portion of the partition scheme. In the case of Transjordan, this was agreed upon clearly in a secret understanding with Britain and to some extent, with the JA. [26]

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[26] Pappe', *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp.131-131; Golda Meir, My Life, (London: Cox and Wyman Ltd, 1975) pp. 175-180; Avi Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, The Zionists, and Palestine 1921-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp. 178-195.

Second, many signs indicated the openness of Arab actors to political initiatives, which might or might not have led to peaceful agreements, but could definitely have led to a more stable post-war environment with much less enmity between the former belligerents. A clear example of this susceptibility is the case of Transjordan. Even the Egyptians were open to Bernadotte's proposals in August as their ambassador to the US stated through informal channels, and after October they were even content to see the Palestinian Arab land in the south reduced to the Gaza Strip with an honourable evacuation of the Fallujah pocket.[27] Syria and Iraq, the most vocally hawkish in the Arab camp, avoided fighting during the last three-quarters of the war, and even the new Syrian regime in Husni Zaiem after the coup of 1949 was open to peace proposals.[28]

Hence, there was definitely a pathway for political resolution which Israeli policy and grand strategy could have exploited. This pathway was not only illuminated by Moshe Sharett, but even by the hawkish cabinet adviser on Arab affairs, Eliahu Sasson, who formulated a proposal with the secretary of the political department of the Jewish Agency in March 1947, stating that the best policy to deal with the Arab threat was "to defeat them militarily and then give them an outlet for honourable retreat".[29]

The Israeli grand strategy in the sense of orchestrating all means was excellent in view of the ability of the new state to mobilize internal and external resources to build a modern army of 20,000 in early 1948 and expand it to more than 100,000 by the end of the year. In addition to massive expansion in its weaponry systems and maturing socio-political structures, these were the enablers of the war outcome.

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[27] *Tal, War in Palestine,* pp.350-351.

[28] Pappe', *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict*, pp.191-192.

[29] Tal, *War in Palestine*, p14.

But in the long-term sense, grand strategy was victim to Ben-Gurion's hard assumptions, as his maxim was illustrative; "Negev without peace is better than peace without Negev".[30]

Military Strategy

The strategic guidance in the 1948 War was to set a generic **framework** and **broad mission objectives**, which the operational discourse would strive to achieve in the unfolding military events.

The regular war was composed of four stages: defensive from 15 May till the first truce of 11 June, then the Ten Days Offensive in July on the northern and central fronts, then the offensive of October in the Negev and the north, and finally the thrust to expel the Egyptians from the Negev in December.

In the **first stage**, The Iraqi and Syrian thrusts were halted by settlement defences and the Arab armies' poor logistical capacity. The Arab Legion succeeded in expelling the Israelis from the Old City of Jerusalem and cutting the route to Tel Aviv at Latrun. The main Egyptian column succeeded in reaching Ashdod, only thirty miles south of Tel Aviv. The Givati brigade with tactical air support aimed to defeat these forces in operation Plechet, but was repulsed by Egyptian defences. But it succeeded in holding the Egyptians there and exploding the bridge that would have enabled them to push on north.[31]

The first truce was imposed by UN on 11 of June for one month and was accepted eagerly by both sides. The **second stage** of fighting commenced one day before the formal end of the truce which the Arabs refused to extend. It lasted ten days and opened with a reversed military balance in numbers (since the Israelis had strengthened the existing nine IDF brigades, and added two more (the 7th and the light armoured 8th brigades), and enhanced equipment platforms for the Israelis. The IDF now had artillery, and greatly extended its arsenal of small arms, fighter planes, armoured cars, and even a few tanks.

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[30] Shlaim, "Israel and the Arab Coalition" in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, *The War for Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[31] Tal, *War in Palestine*, pp.177-184; Kenneth Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln and London*:* Nebraska University Press, 2002) pp.15-18.

The Ten Days offensive represented the beginning of a long Israeli offensive lasting from the 11 July till the armistices in the spring of 1949. It was interrupted by another arranged truce on the19th of July which was observed by UN but never fully respected by either side.

During this stage the southern front was kept in active defence, but other fronts were busy and it ended with Israeli victory on the northern and eastern fronts and the securing of a new route to West Jerusalem after the failure to expel the Arab Legion from Latrun which would have unblocked the main road to Tel Aviv.

The main operation in this stage was Danny, which aimed to occupy Lydda and Ramle and then open the central corridor. Lydda and Ramle were outside the area allotted to Israel in the UN Partition Plan but were needed for three reasons: firstly the area was close to the densely populated Jewish centre and was also the base of the corridor. Subjugating it should neutralize the potential threat and enable easier operations to open the corridor. Secondly, Lydda airport was the main one in Palestine. Thirdly, the *psychological* effect of success on the Arab states would be considerable as these were the first "Palestinian" portions of the partition to fall into the hands of Israelis in spite of being guarded by the Arab Legion, the most able Arab force.

The third stage occurred in October with the activation of the southern front and a lesser effort in the north. The basic political purpose of this stage was to deliver a blow to Egyptian forces in the south sufficient to expel them from the Negev, and to clear ALA from the northern Galilee.

Operation *Hoav* entailed three steps; firstly to break through the Ashdod-Hebron corridor from the eastern side at Iraq Al-Menshyya. This failed but Allon shifted his forces quickly to the western site around Iraq Swidan, where they made a breakthrough at Hulikat. The Egyptian forces in the corridor were reduced and encircled in the Fallujah Pocket. The second successful step was a quick drive to occupy Beersheba, the main hub of the Negev and also for the Egyptian forces at Hebron.

The third step did not meet the same success. The Yeftach brigade transferred to Negev was to thrust west between Gaza and Beit-Hanoun to cut the retreating lines of the Egyptian forces at Ashdod. This would have led to isolating the main Egyptian forces and ending the war. However, Egyptian engineers created an innovative wooden path for retreat to the Gaza coast.[32]

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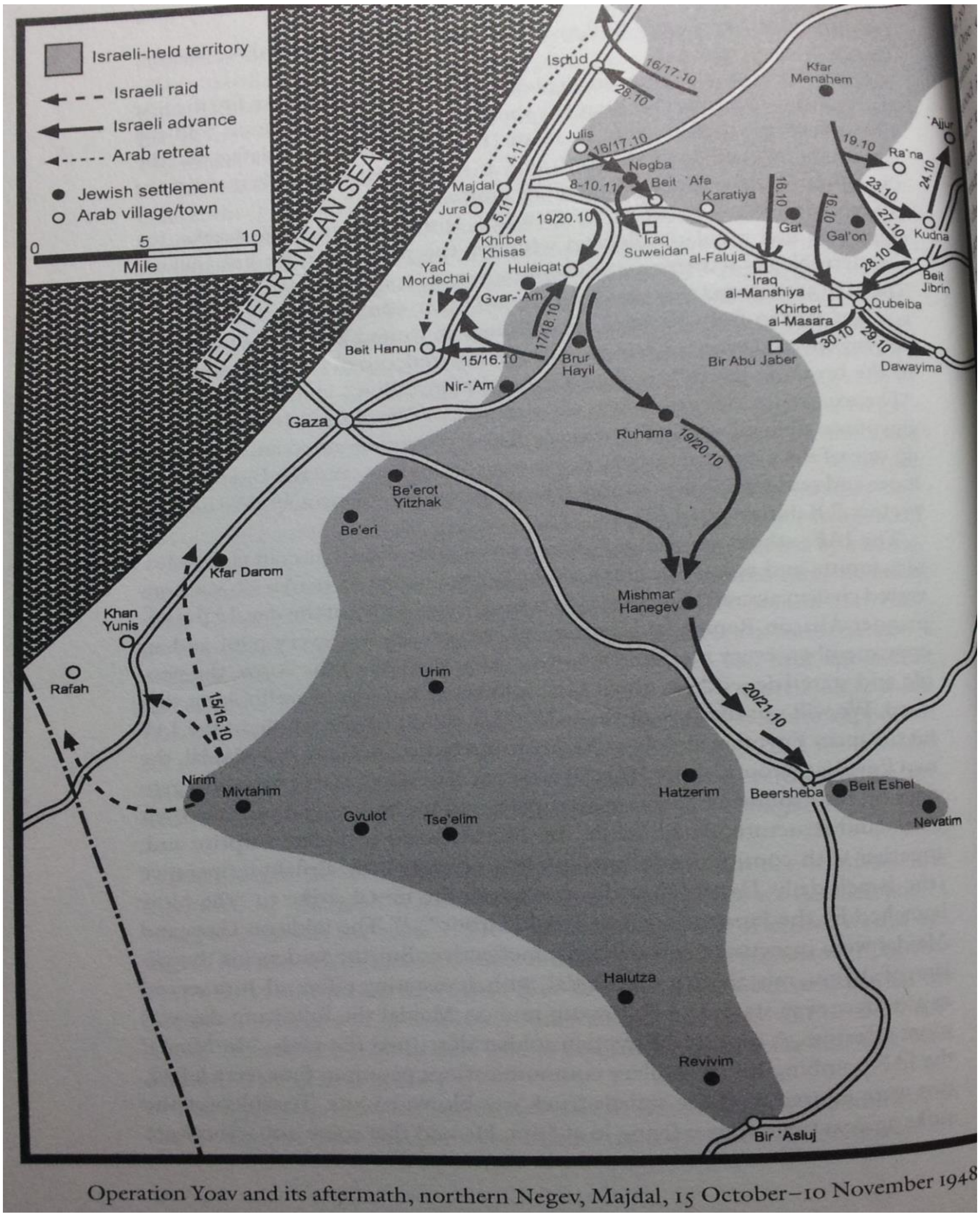
[32] Accounts for operation Yoav can be found in Trevor Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory: the Arab Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (Greenwood Vlg: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co, 3rd edition, 1992) pp.93-99; Pollack, *Arabs at War*, pp.21-22; Netanel Lorch, The Edge of the Sword: Israel's War of Independence 1947-1949 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons/Putnam & Co, 1961) pp.335-360; General Ibrahim Shakib, *The War of 1948: An Egyptian Perspective* (Cairo: Dar al Zahra'a, 1986, Arabic) pp.312-330.


Israeli-held territory
Israeli raid
Israeli advance
Arab retreat
Jewish settlement
Arab village/town
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Mile
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Isdud
16/17.10
28.10
Kfar Menahem
`Ajjur
Julis
16/17.10
Negba
Beit `Afa
8-10.11
Karatiya
16.10
16.10
Gat
Gal'on
19.10
Ra'na
24.10
23.10
27.10
Kudna
28.10
Beit Jibrin
Majdal
Jura
4.11
5.11
Khirbet Khisas
19/20.10
`Iraq Suweidan
al-Faluja
`Iraq al-Manshiya
Khirbet al-Masara
Qubeiba
30.10
29.10
Dawayima
Bir Abu Jaber
Yad Mordechai
Huleiqat
Gvar-`Am
17/18.10
Brur Hayil
Beit Hanun
15/16.10
Nir-`Am
Gaza
Ruhama
19/20.10
Be'erot Yitzhak
Be'eri
Kfar Darom
Mishmar Hanegev
Khan Yunis
Rafah
Urim
15/16.10
20/21.10
Nirim
Mivtahim
Gvulot
Tse'elim
Hatzerim
Beersheba
Beit Eshel
Nevatim
Halutza
Revivim
Bir `Asluj

Operation Yoav and its aftermath, northern Negev, Majdal, 15 October–10 November 1948

Operation Hoav[33]

The Fourth Stage came in December when the IDF planned operation *Horev* to expel the Egyptian forces permanently from the Negev and Gaza.[34]

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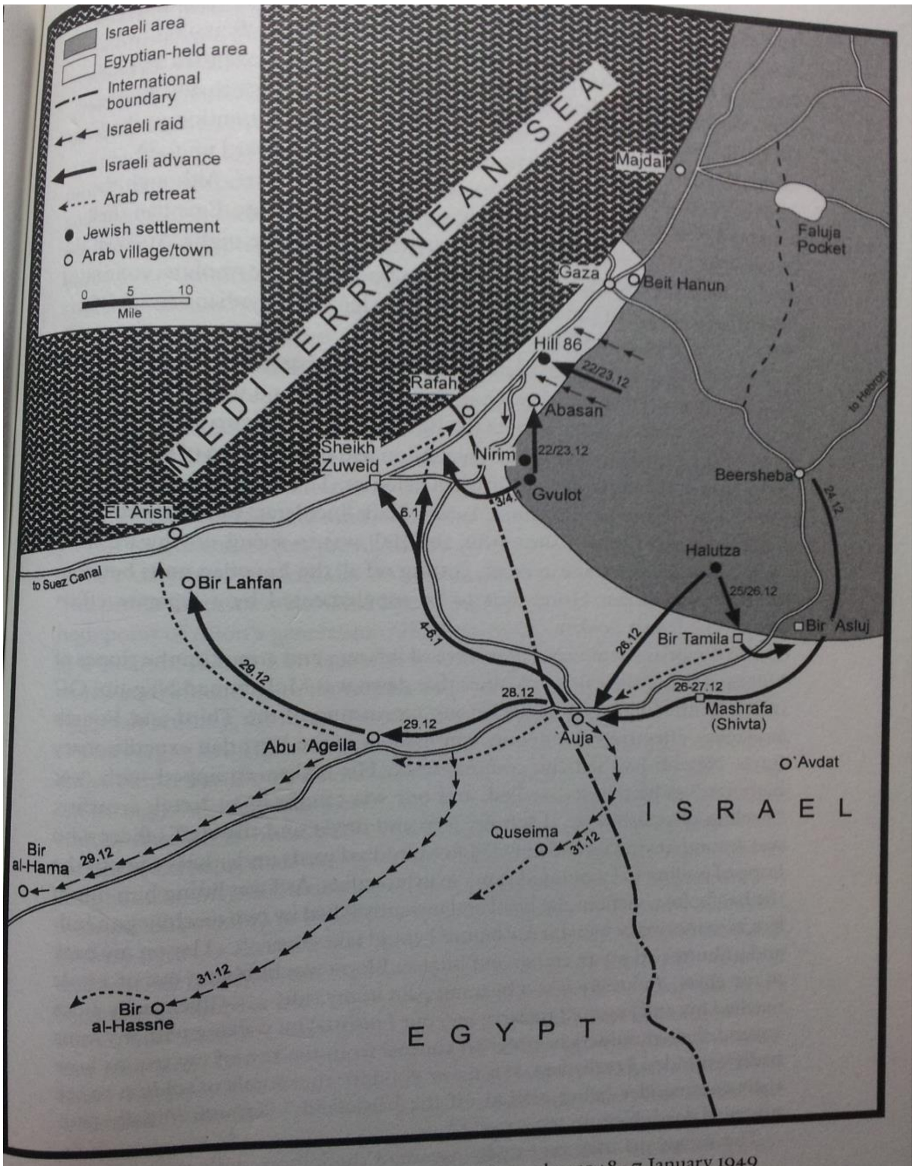
[33] Benny Morris, *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) p.324.

[34] Accounts for operation Horev could be found in Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory*, pp.108-9; Pollack, *Arabs at War,* pp.21-24; Netanel Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword: Israel's War of Independence 1947-1949*, (New York: 1961), pp.404-434; Shakib, *The War of 1948,* pp.389-407.

The invading forces in Sinai occupied Al-Arish airport but were kept outside the city by strong defences and were exhausted and overstretched. An ultimatum from the British to evacuate the Sinai or face a British intervention was issued. Britain and Egypt were having tough negotiations at the time on whether to retain their 1936 Treaty so Britain found it an opportunity to appease and pressure the Egyptians. In response to the ultimatum, Ben-Gurion called back the operation.


Israeli area
Egyptian-held area
International boundary
Israeli raid
Israeli advance
Arab retreat
Jewish settlement
Arab village/town
0 5 10
Mile
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Majdal
Faluja Pocket
Gaza
Beit Hanun
Hill 86
22/23.12
Rafah
Abasan
Sheikh Zuweid
Nirim
22/23.12
Gvulot
6.1
3/4.1
El `Arish
to Suez Canal
Bir Lahfan
to Hebron
Beersheba
24.12
Halutza
25/26.12
Bir Tamila
Bir `Asluj
28.12
4-6.1
29.12
28.12
29.12
26-27.12
Mashrafa (Shivta)
`Auja
Abu `Ageila
`Avdat
ISRAEL
Quseima
31.12
Bir al-Hama
29.12
31.12
Bir al-Hassne
EGYPT

Operation Horev, Rafah and Sinai, 22 December 1948–7 January 1949

Operation Horev[35]

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[35] Morris, *1948: The First Arab Israeli War, p.359.*

To assess the Israeli military strategic options that shaped operational art and capability, two positive remarks and one negative can be made:

First, strategic guidance was successful in in withstanding the initial invasion and providing a window for building and enriching the army[36] by keeping it in defensive mode. It also manipulated the operations to respect the political sensitivities of Transjordan in the later stages and of Britain, and achieved operational security and space by reaching a political understanding with Transjordan. This understanding freed up six brigades during Operation Horev to attack three Egyptian brigades, one of which was isolated and the others exhausted.

Second, as weaponry and tactics were mostly infantry-based, the IDF depended on **piecemeal operational bites** made feasible by a mobile and **indirect approach**. This approach was a necessity because of a shortage of artillery and armour for a war of attrition or high tempo operations, and also because of the poor record of IDF offensives against formidable defences as in Latrun, Jenin and Fallujah. The operational approach was helped by shifting forces between fronts to create higher concentration of forces, using the short internal lines, and night/mobile tactics perfected during Haganah's irregular operations.

Third, the negative elements were in the area of ***tacticization of strategy.*** An obvious example of this was Operation Horev, in which Allon's moves were not under the control even of the General Staff and proved unproductive. The Israeli military strategy also played a part in creating the tragedy of the war by increasing the refugee problem by a formal policy of expelling the local Arab population and destroying villages, which would preclude the possibility for a future political conclusion, as discussed earlier.

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[36] Most Israeli resources agree on the total numbers as 35,000, 65,000 in October 1948 reaching 90,000 in December and over 100,000 in the field by January 1949, Ben Gurion, *War Diaries*, pp. 780-783.

In weaponry, The Haganah's budget in 1947 was 770,000 Palestinian pounds; nearly half of which was devoted to the military industry in Timothy Hoyt, *Military Industry and Regional Defence Policy* (London: Routledge 2006) pp. 74-75. However, the expansion of procurement was massive. By October 1948, the IDF could create a new armoured brigade; mainly armoured cars and Jeeps plus four tanks, but the real change was in artillery and fighters. Although the tactical outcome of the new weapons was minimal, their appearance on the battlefield had a shocking effect on Arab armies since they had never expected to encounter them.

With very competent military strategy, enhancing operational capabilities and shaping the operational art, the Israeli strategic practical ability is marked as high in spite of moderate grade in the domains of having a clear policy and grand strategy.

The Strategic Ability of the Arabs (Coalition Failure)

Conceptual

Despite not having a formal military or strategic education, King Abdullah had rich political and military experience gained during his long struggle for power during the Arab Revolution and his conflict with the Saudis.[37] Abdullah was very sensitive. He often spoke of the limitations of force and of not overloading the military with tasks exceeding their ability.[38] He also benefited from the advice of his closest general, Glubb Pasha, who kept a close liaison with him during the war.

In Egypt, King Farouk hardly had any strategic knowledge[39] in spite of his military uniforms and stars. His war minister Mohamed Haider Pasha was no better and spent a large portion of his career running the prisons, and Nukrashi Pasha and other cabinet members were kept segregated from the military area.

Few accounts of Farouk's vision are available and all are very disappointing as when he emphasised when meeting with the military before the war that much of the work would be done by the Arab Legion, and the Egyptians were only aiming at Tel Aviv as a “military demonstration”.[40]

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[37] Syed Ali El-Edroos, *The Hashemite Arab Army 1908-1979: an Appreciation and Analysis of Military Operations*, (Amman: The Publishing Committee, 1980), pp.171-175.

[38] Glubb Pasha, *A Soldier with the Arabs* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957) pp.150-152.

[39] He had a short period of affiliation to the Woolwich Royal Military Academy, but not a formal education. Yunan Labib Rezq, 'The Second Trial of Aziz Pasha', Cairo: *Al-Ahram Newspaper*, 14/6/2014.

Iraq had a more knowledgeable political and military leadership in spite of its lack of experience and confidence, given that their only military experience was defeat during Rashid Keilani’s upheaval in 1941. Prince Abdul-Ilah, the Regent of Iraq, was an undistinguished member of the Hashemite dynasty with little experience or ideas. But Nuri Al-Said had a much more developed political and military ability; both conceptual and political. He graduated from the Turkish military academy and after serving in the Ottoman Army before WWI became a prominent figure in the Arab revolution.[41]

Despite the generally **moderate** conceptual ability, the totally bankrupted institutional layer at the coalition level obstructed all possibilities of improving practical strategy.

Institutional

Two major difficulties undermined the Arab strategic ability in the1948 war. The first was the **inability to form a coalition** and the second was **the poor state capacity in general**.

The Arab war efforts cannot accurately be considered as participation in a “coalition”. Within the so-called “coalition” of Arab states, there was neither unity of political purposes or strategy, nor a platform to create, facilitate and review such essential strategic unity.

Politically, as the Arab states and non-state actors worked essentially for their own self-benefitting agendas, the common stake in rescuing Palestine was relegated to a mere rhetorical device.[42]

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[40] Shakib, *The War of 1948*, p.161.

[41] El-Edroos, *The Hashemite Arab Army*, p.10.

[42] Avi Kober, *Coalition Defection: The Dissolution of Arab Anti-Israeli Coalitions in War and Peace* (London: Praeger, 2002) pp.181-188.

The other factor undermining the Arabs' strategic ability, which also narrows our scope for analysis of their strategy, is the general theme of the **immaturity of Arab states' political and especially military infrastructures**. Egypt had a comparatively long modern political history, although it suffered from political fragmentation, but Iraq, Syria and Transjordan were comparative newcomers to governance and party politics. Only Syria was independent while the others were under some form of foreign hegemony. Militarily, their armies represented a form of constabulary or at best undertook limited duties related to specific missions. The Arab Legion was officered mainly by British officers and was based on the British Army in terms of its logistics, medical services and combat support

Although the Political Committee of the Arab League, comprising the political leaders of the member countries or their representatives, succeeded in taking specific decisions such as embarking on the regular war, accepting the First and Second Truces, and resuming fighting after the First Truce, it failed to establish an **organisational** platform to discuss the policy and strategy options effectively. Another much graver problem existed: each state was working towards its individual political end and strategy, which were mostly not even clear to themselves.

At the national level there was a lack of a permanent or temporary platform at the political-military interface for reviewing environments, deciding upon policy or grand strategy or critically discussing strategic military options.

Information sharing worked well from the military to the political layer, with a time lag due to problematic communications, but it did not work well the other way around. This was a general complaint raised in the meeting of Arab General Staffs in Cairo in October 1947. The Chiefs complained that they were kept in dark regarding diplomatic moves and developments. [43]

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[43] Shakib, *The War of 1948: An Egyptian Perspective*, p.353.

The real problem, at coalition and national levels, was that the opinion of the military was neither sought nor accounted for in decision making. This neglect originated in the underdeveloped state system in which the military was largely under the personalized rule of the political leader.

Military commands in the four countries provided proposals[44] to increase resources and military development or asked for tasks matching their capabilities, or at least for greater clarification of the political aim, but their proposals were turned down repeatedly.

In Transjordan alone, King Abdullah the prime decision-maker kept in close consultation with his Prime Minister, Tawfeeq Abul-Huda, and the military leader General Glubb. He kept smooth information sharing generally apart from his covert negotiations with Israel to avoid offending the nationalist spirit.[45] Although the decision-making process was fairly personalized, there was a degree of comprehensive and critical debate on policy and the best serving strategy (grand and military) within the uneven triangle, evidenced by the correspondences between Abdullah and Glubb at different stages of the war discussing the finest details of the political and military consequences of important moves on the battlefield.[46]

The structural weakness of the “coalition”, however, plagued all five parameters of political-military relations in the war: the ability to keep a productive dialogue in theory and practice between policy and operations. Clear authorization was maintained at national level, but not at the coalition level. In the case of Transjordan however, there was competent critical assessment, clear authorization and strategic intervention of politicians, but information sharing and the formidable position of the military were moderate. This marks the coalition’s institutional ability as a complete failure, and Transjordan’s as high.

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[44] Look at the description of this conference of Chiefs of Staff and its proposals which was held in Cairo 10-12 November 1948 in Shakib, *The War of 1948,* pp.349-353.

[46] Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs,* pp.118, 142-145, 156 & 234-235.

Practical

Policy and Grand Strategy

Can strategy be assessed by any form of measurements in the absence of clear political aims? Political aims – to avert the partition militarily -- were stated just after the UN resolution, by the Arab League summit in Aalya, Lebanon, in 1947. However, the king of **Transjordan,** the formal Supreme Commander of all the armies and the strategist for the most formidable force, the Arab Legion, had a different and contradicting policy: bringing the West Bank and Jerusalem directly under his rule, with the Negev or any other territory that might fall into his hands, and accepting the partition if military events favoured the Jewish side. His ultimate aim was the project of "Greater Syria" where Syria, Palestine and Transjordan would form a strong kingdom under his rule. [47]

Also, The Arab leadership, especially in Syria and Iraq had a two- faced policy -- one for declaration in front of their peoples and outsiders to satisfy public demands, and an unstated agenda to use their military participation to combat the Hashemite Greater Syria plan.

But how did these political leaderships plan to survive the moment when their people faced reality? They aimed at limited military achievements and to be able to blame each other for losing the war.[48]

In **Egypt**, policy making was more complex and opaque. The young King was too immersed in his private life to see what others, including his Prime Minister and the military, regarding the imbalance of power with Israel and the lack of Arab unity. Although Nukrashi was dragged into the war by wishful thinking that victory could be achieved by the efforts of the other states, with a lesser role for the Egyptian Army, he was forced to confront reality just before the First Truce. He then imitated the other Arab leaders, aiming for any achievement that would appease his people and then using the diplomatic pathway to pave the way for a respectable exit. He made this point explicitly in his speech to Parliament in December 1948.[49]

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[47] *Avi Shlaim, The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, The Zionists, and Palestine 1921-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp.32-38.

[48] Joshua Landis, "Syria and the Palestine War: Fighting King Abdullah's Greater Syria Plan", in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, *The War for Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 176-204.

Simply speaking, the Arab side undertook the war of 1948 with **very minimal effort at the grand strategic level[50] to achieve their ultimate total aim**: averting Partition and destroying the new state of Israel.

Policy is not a pure *diktat* on strategy, as the political aim is not tyrannical.[51] Policy originates from cultural, historical, geopolitical, geo-economical and ideological roots, and is formulated through a complex process. Yet it should be brought to match what strategy considers achievable. Hence, although strategy does not decide which policy should be adopted -- accepting Israel or destroying it -- its role during the stage of policy formulation is to decide which political option is achievable and which is not.

For the Arab states in 1947 there were three major political options: accepting Partition and trying to help the new Arab state of Palestine become viable, preventing Partition by military means, or choosing something in between – reshaping the planned Partition to achieve a solution more favourable to the Arab side.

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[49] Shakib, *The War of 1948,* pp.349-353.

[50] The Egyptian army fielded only 5000 forces in the early stage from its existing strength of 55.000. The Iraqis fielded the same, the Syrians and Lebanese had already tiny standing armies and the Legion was deployed mostly in Palestine; around 6000.The maximum figures of actually deployed Egyptians and Iraqis after October were 18,000-20,000 men and up to 12,000 for the Arab Legion, in Shakib, *The War of 1948,* pp. 170-176; Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, p.195; Shlaim, 'Israel and the Arab Coalition' in Shlaim and Rogan, *The War for Palestine*.

[51] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) p.78.

The **first grand strategic option** was feasible as it did not require any extensive military action beyond securing the agreed borders of the Arab portion of Palestine. Even if the Jewish pre-state had had aggressive wishes to expand, it was still in its infancy trying hard to set up its political and military machinery.

The **second option,** averting partition militarily, could also have been feasible if the Arabs had mobilized their resources and used a comprehensive grand strategic approach early on. From the summit of 1946, when partition was on the horizon as the American-British Committee obviously supported it, there were good ideas on the table presented mainly by the Iraqis for mobilizing Arab resources, preparing for military intervention by increasing their armies' capacities, organisation, weaponry and combined command, and applying economic/oil pressure on the US and Britain to weaken their support for partition.

In fact, the US and Britain were not fully committed to partition as a policy. After the First Truce, the US presented a proposal to rescind the UN Partition Plan in favour of international guardianship of Palestine until a reasonable diplomatic option could be formed. Britain, in addition to its earlier abstention during the UN vote on Partition, endorsed Bernadotte's plan.[52]

However, all these proposals were turned down, even by the Iraqis[53], because of the lack of political will among the Arab states as discussed above.

Given the failure to initiate collective action before the war, could such a comprehensive grand strategy and mobilisation have been workable just before the 14 May, after the First Truce or even in October or December 1948?

Generally, as a conflict escalates, the window for strategic manoeuvre becomes more limited; there is less time for the complex tasks of mobilization, restructuring the military and coalition means vis-à-vis those of the enemy which are simultaneously growing.

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[52] Tal, *1948, War in Palestine*, pp.276-7.

[53] Charles Tripp, "Iraq and the 1948 War: mirror of Iraq's disorder", in Avi Shlaim et al., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the United States and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) pp. 125-150.

In military terms, the initial Arab position during the First Truce was advantageous and if they had maintained it and not responded to Israeli provocation, had dealt seriously with the tasks of mobilization, organisation and grand strategy; there was a possibility of achieving their policy aims. But once the Truce ended new military and state power in Israel meant the opportunity was irrevocably lost.

The third option of achieving a more viable and advantageous partition on a permanent or temporary basis was also potentially feasible by different strategies and at different times.

It could have been achieved by Arab engagement in positive diplomacy before the UN Resolution on partition was voted upon. However, the Arab states did not do so and the boycott of UNSCOP by both the Arab Palestinian representatives and the Arab states was particularly damaging.[54] Some adaptation of the Partition Plan which was more favourable to the Arab side could have been achieved through an *irregular military strategy* of support for irregular militias acting in opposition to the plan if such a strategy had been properly developed, supported and overseen.

A modified partition was also feasible by *regular or combined military means*, either by maintaining the truce and manipulating the diplomatic options. But even in September when they were in a grave military situation the Arabs harshly rejected Bernadotte's proposal as well as large-scale military mobilisation and a build-up of coalition forces before the Egyptian defences were broken and their military deployment was fragmented.

Military Strategy

The League's Military Committee did formulate a plan for the invasion, but it amounted to little more than a general idea. It envisaged simultaneous and orchestrated thrusts from four directions -- the Egyptian army from the south, the Lebanese from the north, the Syrians from the north-east, and the Iraqis and Jordanians from the east to meet up with one of the Arab Legion brigades stationed in Mandatory Palestine with the British forces. These four thrusts would then converge towards the centre of gravity of the Jewish settlement in Palestine -- Tel Aviv and the coastal strip where the heaviest areas of population, industry and infrastructure were situated.[55]

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[54] Pappe', *the Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* pp.23-26.

The first problem of the comprehensive plan was, as the Egyptian contingent to the Committee pointed out, that it mistook its initial target, slowing the path towards the centre of gravity and wasting the armies' efforts and resources in minor tasks. Also, with the limited resources available and the basic deficiency of the Arab armies in fluid offensive operations, the only window for victory was the first few weeks of the invasion before the Jews were able expand their manpower and weaponry through a massive influx from abroad and impose mobile operations on the Arabs in disadvantageous terrain.

The main problem, however, was the limited resources allotted to the plan. The Egyptian delegation told the meeting at least four divisions would be needed.[56] Even if they had been well equipped and trained, the forces that invaded Palestine in the first stage were much fewer in number and inadequate. They totalled one and half divisions (one and half Egyptian brigades, two underpowered Jordanian brigades, one and half Syrian, one and half Iraqi, and one Lebanese battalion)[57]. The Jewish forces, in contrast, were able to deploy six brigades and more numerous forces for settlement defences.[58]

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[55] Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory*, pp.47-59; Pollack, *Arabs at War*, pp.16-18.

[56] Pollack, *Arabs at War*, pp.16-18.

[57] There is a general agreement on these figures (15-2000) in the Arab, Israeli and Western sources: Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory*, pp.41-42 ; Tal, *War in Palestine, 1948*, p.163; Shakib, *The War of 1948,* p. 176; and Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, p.94.

[58] Ben-Gurion*, When Israel Fought in Battle*, p. 780.

Third, the plan did not envisage any proper role for irregular forces.

After acknowledging all the chaos facing the policy and grand strategy, were there still any alternative approaches for military strategy available to the Arab armies? I assume there were regular or combined options.

The regular military strategies could serve a total or limited policy. For total policy, the plan of the League's Military Committee was fairly reasonable provided the Arab states adopted its requirement at both grand and military strategic levels as indicated earlier.

However, more limited approaches were also available which would have involved much less work at the grand strategic/coalition levels.

Firstly, the Arab armies might have chosen a multi-front approach from the beginning but kept their forces far less dispersed which would have enabled them to use the resulting reserve forces for active defence duties or even counteroffensives.

For the Egyptian forces, in particular, a more focused approach would have enabled them to strengthen the advance to Ashdod and to avoid the lateral thrust to Hebron instead of clinging to the Negev with insufficient forces. Alternatively, they could have confined themselves to the Gaza area and southern Negev while using the irregular Palestinian forces for harassing operations towards the settlements. This would have dragged the advancing Jewish brigades into confrontations in which they would have been at a disadvantage while the Egyptians would have maintained strong defences. It is notable that this is a mode of warfare the Arabs had previously mastered and its potential was demonstrated by the losses sustained by the IDF at Latrun and Fallujah.

Second, The Arabs might have chosen to keep limited forces for defending the peripheries while using external lines, including from Egypt, for a much more developed approach in the central axis of the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv corridor.

A third way was the adoption of a *salvage* strategy to make up for their initial faulty approach. They could have accepted the first truce and subsequently not responded to Israeli temptations to fight and then left the rest to diplomacy.

Or, in an alternative salvage strategy, the Arabs could have consolidated their forces and used them in a more combined and aggressive way. After the IDF's grave losses at Latrun it was clear that the Jews were not going to fall into this trap again as they created the Burma Road to ensure secure access to Jerusalem. The Arab Legion would have been better employed in a pincer operation, either with the Egyptians to clear the southern belt and threaten Tel Aviv, or with Iraqis to do the same in the north collar, but in any case, the Burma Road should have been closed.

All these military moves could have repaired the grave mistakes that resulted in dangerously dispersed Egyptian forces in the south and immobile deployments of Jordanian, Iraqis and Syrians until the end of war. More importantly, it would have applied tremendous political, military and human pressure on the Jewish presence in Palestine which would in turn have convinced the international community to push more equitable peace proposals (such as those drawn up by the Americans and Bernadotte after the First Truce). Such pressure may well have raised the chances of leadership accepting such peace plans and would also have provided some protection to the remaining Arab communities in Jewish occupied areas.

An even more potentially effective approach would have been a **combined military strategy** using the irregular forces, the volunteers and ALA for specific roles such as holding the routes of advance especially at the settlements, or undertaking guerrilla fighting in the difficult terrain of Samaria and Galilee in order to slow and drain the Yishuv military capacity. In order to accomplish this, the Arab irregular forces would have had to become truly irregular, both tactically and in composition. This combined strategy was used by the Chinese in both the war against nationalists and in the Korean War.[59]

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[59] Christopher Tuck, *Understanding Land Warfare* (London: Routledge 2014) pp.119-121.

By tracing then the five practical parameters at the coalition level, the Arabs achieved a moderate grade in holding a clear policy and enhancing operational capability, but failed totally in formulating sound grand and military strategies and shaping the operational art strategically. So, the overall estimate of the practical tier is low.

In Transjordan, Abdullah and Glubb managed carefully to have a professional army first attuned to regular warfare and expanded it after the first truce. They succeeded in mobilizing these forces quickly at the beginning of war to evict the Jews from Jerusalem and achieved a tangible battlefield success by severing the main strategic communication line. The decision to defect strategically from the war effort would leave them alone facing the galvanised victorious Israeli army and more vulnerable to coercion to surrender the "little triangle"[60] an turn a blind eye to the occupation of Eilat. [61] In addition, Abdullah lost much political prestige in the Arab world which had been a primary objective. With clear policy but moderate ability in formulating grand and military strategies, and enhancing the operational capability and the appropriateness of the operational art to strategic context, the overall marking of Transjordanian practical ability is moderate.

Outcome

A conclusion to the of 1948 War was attempted through two UN-mediated pathways; ending hostilities by armistice agreements which was successful, and searching for a political conclusion for the whole conflict through the UN Conciliatory Commission for Palestine – UNCCP which was established in November 1948 to replace Bernadotte after his assassination which was a sign of failure.

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[60] A sector of land of 150 square miles east to the triangle of Tulkarm, Jenin and Nablus which Israel saw as a requirement to enhance the security of the coastal strip. Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs,* p.234.

[61] The Arabic village of "Umm Rashrash" which became the only Israeli port on the Red Sea, Tal, *1948 War*, p.461.

In estimating the outcome of war for all sides, ***Israel*** achieved the lion's share as it was enabled to build its state with defensible borders, at least temporarily, and to extend its territory from the 53% of Mandatory Palestine allotted to it by the UN resolution to around 78 %. However, no political peace was achieved and the war left many seeds for forthcoming wars. The strategic pathway in the 1948 War, albeit with short-term successes, planted more seeds for the next wars and only aggravated the political will of Israel's opponents by the addition of animosity.

Transjordan achieved much of what it aimed for as an individual nation in terms of: gaining the West Bank with the exception of Lydda, Ramlah, the Little Triangle and Eilat. It annexed the West Bank to form with Transjordan the Kingdom of Jordan in 1950. Nevertheless, King Abdullah's interest in securing the position of leading the Arab League or using his Palestinian gains to advance his Greater Jordan project was crippled. Actually, he lost his reputation among the Arabs by the end of the war, and lost his life in 1951 when he was assassinated in East Jerusalem.

The causal link tracing in this war follows the presumed theory to a large extent. The strategic practical ability was high advantageous for Israel (high) facing the Arabs (low), and low advantageous vis-à-vis Jordan (high Israeli ability versus moderate Transjordanian). This led to the strategic success of Israel in the first (general) war, and strategic advantage in the second.

Generally, the practical strategic ability for both Arabs and Israel reflected the combined effect of conceptual and institutional abilities, with more emphasis on the latter. Only Transjordan was outmanoeuvred by the strategic imbalance favouring Israel massively after the general Arab defeat. Not many strategic options were left at this late stage.

To conclude, one of the unintended effects of the 1948 War for all sides was the catalysis for a political earthquake in the Arab region, especially in Egypt where the humiliating defeat of 1948 became a major factor behind the Military Coup of 1952 and the rise of Nasserism.[62]

THE 1967 WAR

Political Backgrounds

After the 1956 war that was perceived and proclaimed by Nasser's regime, and accepted by most Arabs, as a political victory, a new era of Nasserism erupted in Egypt and the region, the pillars of which were first, charismatic leadership with a radical political ideology mixing Arab nationalism and socialism and, second, a policy with a sense of adventurism.[63]

Nasser intended to portray himself as representing the "Arab Nation", at that time a new identity or rather an aspiration to be the new Saladin who would unite the artificially divided Arab states in order to *free* the Arab World from western imperialism and its regional stakeholder - Israel.[64]

Within Egypt, Nasser launched a promising process of development based on industrialization and social reform, starting with land re-distribution and accelerating with the nationalization of the banks in the late 1950s and corporations in the early 1960s. Accompanying these policies was a programme of political indoctrination.

Regionally, Nasser played an active role in accelerating the independence movements in Algeria and other Arab countries, especially in the Arab peninsula, Iraq and the Levant. He also encouraged the founding of the Palestine Liberation

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[62] Gerges, "Egypt and the 1948 War" in Rogan and Shlaim, *The War on Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p.168. No wonder if the humiliating defeat of 1948 due to the perceived "corrupted and collaborating" monarchy was a major point in the revolutionary first address of 23/7/1952.

[63] Laura M. James, *Nasser at War: Arab images of the enemy*, (London: Palgrave, 2006) p. ix.

[64] James, *Nasser at War,* p.x.

Organisation (PLO) in 1964. However, these moves were seen by the traditional kings and presidents of the region as threats directly aimed at overthrowing their regimes.

In 1958, the year of the union with Syria, two major attempts at changing regimes took place in Jordan and Lebanon which required the deployment and intervention of foreign troops, British and American respectively.

Poor relations with the Saudi Arabian regime were exacerbated by Egypt's involvement with the 1962 republican "revolution" in North Yemen which Riyadh viewed as a direct threat.

Outside the Arab world, Nasserite Egypt achieved a high place in the political discourse as Nasser took a major role in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement. Despite the Movement's professed neutrality between the protagonists of the Cold War, Nasser invented a policy of "positive non-alignment" which brought him closer to the USSR in terms of rhetoric and practical action.

Until 1962, he maintained some balance, if not equality, in dealing with the two major powers. Egypt received regular economic aid from the United States, and the US tone towards it was not very critical until the Yemen War erupted.

Nasser's non-alignment policy was not much welcomed by Khrushchev, but the Soviet leadership was forced to maintain its relationship with Egypt to gain greater influence in the Middle East, especially in view of the change of Soviet doctrine in the 1960s towards having military bases in the ME to assist its "external function".[65] During his visit to Egypt in 1965, Khrushchev underlined the generous nature of the Soviet relationship with Egypt – highlighting the scale of military and economic aid which exceeded its aid for any other state outside the USSR.[66]

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[65] Galia Golan, "The Cold War and the Soviet Attitude towards Arab-Israeli Conflict" in Nigel Ashton, *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers 1967-73* (London: Routledge, 2007) pp.61-63.

[66] Mohamed H. Heikal, *The Explosion* (Cairo: Al-Ahram, 1990 in Arabic) pp.61-64.

Nevertheless, by 1967 the outcomes of Nasserite policy were not great from all perspectives. Domestically, in spite of a growth rate reaching 7% and expanding education, the domestic economy had been facing severe problems since 1964. High inflation, deteriorating productivity of the newly nationalized industrial system, and the grave shortage of wheat reserves due to US reluctance to continue its aid, were failures that forced Nasser to impose a policy of austerity that affected even the military budget.[67] Meanwhile, the costs of the war in Yemen were rocketing up.[68]

Politically, Egypt was an autocratic state in which political parties were forbidden, including the Egyptian Communist Party, whose outlawing raised tensions with the USSR. Freedom of speech and travel was very restricted, and the state suffered a serious, albeit hidden, confrontation between two big institutions, the political organisation of the Arab Socialist Union which was rallied behind Nasser, and the army led by Abdul-Hakim ʻAmer.

Regionally, the Arab Cold War[69] was at its peak during the Yemen War in which a propaganda war and externally supported attempts at political subversion were dominant. However, Nasser was still the undisputed leader of the Arab World. He succeeded in halting the introduction of any Western-oriented security alliance such as the Baghdad Pact. However, he suffered a decline in his image during the first half of the 1960s after the failed union with Syria and the problematic war in Yemen.

His opponents were not confined to traditionalists or "reactionaries as he called them, but included the progressive axis in Syria and Iraq which sought to overbid him in appealing to popular aspirations. He was even accused of failing in the core task of confronting Israel by 'hiding' behind the UN Emergency Forces in Sinai which had been stationed there since the 1956 war.

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[67] Michael Bennet, *Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State and Society in Egypt and Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) pp. 93-100; Heikal, *The Explosion*, pp.388-394.

[68] Estimates of war ranged between $415 and $690 million over five years 1962-1967, with an average of $100 million yearly. Jessie Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) pp. 195-199.

[69] A term that was coined by Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd Al-Nasir and his Rivals 1958-70*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

Internationally, Egypt's position was exceeding its true capacities and this led to real confrontations with the US over the war in Yemen, the Soviet role in the region and events in the Republic of Congo. Eisenhower's doctrine had sought to use economic and arms aid to receptive Arab states, and military intervention to protect regional territorial integrity with the explicit logic of preventing the USSR's encroachment in the region; but implicitly it carried antipathy towards Nasser's Egypt.[70] This reached the point of planning to subvert Nasser politically and physically if it proved necessary.[71] After a short break under Kennedy, US policy under Johnson became even more antagonistic in tone and action towards what was perceived as Egyptian regional encroachment. Hence the idea of "unleashing Israel" to undermine Nasser's regional status was born in some circles close to Johnson.[72]

In Israel, the developmental and economic parameters were remarkably good in spite of the economic depression which began in 1966. The 1956 War was viewed as a military victory which encouraged the self-confidence of the new state. Although Israel had to relinquish all the territory she occupied in Sinai, in return, she received the opportunity of free passage through the Gulf of Aqaba which was guaranteed by the US after the war.

A new "Jewish identity" which stressed the importance of militarism came to predominate in Israeli society.[73] State institutions were developed and the economic growth rate reached 10% per year from 1957 to 1965. The disparity between Israel and the Arab states accelerated; the per capita income ratio of Egypt and Israel was 1:3 in 1951 and 1:7 in 1966. GNP showed a similar divide. While the 1951 GNP ratio between Egypt and Israel was 4:1; the gap had shrunk to 1.6:1 by 1966.[74] Israel's industrial infrastructure increased nine-fold between 1953 and 1967 and the industrial sector's share of exports rose from 61% to 81%.[75]

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[70] Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[71] Look for example at Michael Oren's accounts on plans alpha and gamma in, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp.8-10.

[72] Heikal, *The Explosion*, p.361, William Quant, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005) pp.40-48.

[73] Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defence Forces,* (New York: Public Affairs Books, 2002) p. 137.

Politically, Mapai was the major political party and was predominant in many social, bureaucratic and economic spheres. David Ben-Gurion left office in 1963, either due to personal reasons as he claimed or to intra-party and governmental strife as others suggested.[76] Then, the postponed aftershocks of the Lavon scandal and its effect on Israeli-Egyptian relations between 1954 and 1965 divided the Mapai, and Ben-Gurion created an opposition party, Rafi. Levi Eshkol, an uncharismatic man lacking military knowledge but expert in organisation and finance and, according to Ben-Gurion holding a nationalist "non-sectarian" ideology took over the Mapai party.

The Israeli military expanded its influence on political decision-making in the absence of Ben-Gurion, although he still maintained informal relations with the army. Internationally, Israel's relations with France cooled with the re-emergence of de Gaulle. However, although relations with the US improved with Kennedy, they had a robust push under Johnson with his clearly pro-Israeli attitude and staff. This attitude was fuelled also by the US conflict with Nasserite Egypt. Improved relations with Western Germany resulted in it extending and expanding reparations payments by more than 10 times, and to the Bonn government channelling many of the weapon systems (mainly M-48 tanks) which the US could not provide to Israel directly due to regional calculations.[77]

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[74] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 137.

[75] Michael Barnett, *Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State and Society in Egypt and Israel (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) p.177.

[76] Zaky Shalom, *Ben-Gurion's Political Struggles, 1963-1967: A Lion in Winter* (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 16-19.

[77] Ami Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War: Government, Armed Forces and Defence Policy 1963-1967* (London: Routledge, 2007) pp.29-31.

After the 1956 War, the southern front was calm with the deployment of UNEF. Israel had the right of free passage through the Gulf of Aqaba to its only port in the Red Sea at Eilat. This right was endorsed by a formal US-British-French understanding in 1957.

Sinai was practically devoid of large-scale Egyptian military forces, in part because of tacit recognition of pacification, and also because of the Egyptian involvement in Yemeni affairs since 1962. This norm was breached only in 1960 during what was known as the 'Rotem crisis', and this had a grave effect later on Nasser's strategy in 1967. With a similar heating up of the guerrilla attacks on the Syrian front in 1960, at the time Syria was in union with Egypt, the IDF undertook a partial mobilization with explicit threats against Syria. Nasser, who was the leader of the United Republic, had to respond. One division was ordered in complete secrecy to move to Sinai and Israel responded by reducing the tension.[78]

Guerrilla operations persisted on the Syrian and Jordanian borders during the 1960s. They should not have had a great impact on Israeli security due to the low human and economic losses inflicted, but Israel perceived them as a direct blow to its ability to deter Arab attacks. This perception was linked to IDF activism and a low threshold for retaliations on a disproportionate scale. The tension was only worsened by Nasser's gross miscalculation and the situation escalated to open war in 1967.

The mounting tension in the region was aggravated by the Arab Cold War and the wider international confrontation between Egypt and the US. Israel was caught in the propaganda of the Progressive Arab Front against those it characterised as reactionaries. There was an intentional escalation of guerrilla warfare by the Syrian pro-Soviet regimes to outbid Nasser who was keeping his front silent.

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[78] Uri Bar-Joseph, "Rotem: The Forgotten Crisis on the Road to the 1967 War", *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol **31***,* July 1996, pp. 547-566.

Two other matters contributed to the escalation: the war for water which invited confrontation between Israel and its neighbours, and the efforts to establish a united Arab military command which irritated Israel, although they ultimately failed.

Israel launched a major project to transfer the water of the Jordan River to the Negev and aimed to drain the Haula Lake for the use of fertilized land. As a result, the first Arab Summit in October 1964 took a decision to undertake multi-stationed projects in order to divert the Jordan River and to establish logistical and utility projects in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

Forecasting an Israeli military response, the summit decided to establish a United Military Command which aimed initially to strengthen the defences of the three states to withstand the expected Israeli retaliatory actions. However, the UMC turned out to be useless and a victim of inter-Arab rivalries. The formal report of its command (headed by Egyptian General Ali Ali Amer) stated clearly the failure of its mission.[79] Nevertheless, it contributed to a rising tension in Israel's perception of its own security.

Over 1956, 1966, and 1967, Israel's eastern and northern borders experienced military exchanges ranging from guerrillas or special operations to tanks and artillery battles and, less frequently, aerial exchanges. Two episodes had devastating results in increasing animosity and pushed all states' calculations to a more belligerent status.

The first was Samau in the West Bank in November 1966 where a Jordanian battalion was ambushed in an Israeli trap with military and civilian losses. Samau attracted international condemnation of Israel, especially from the US whose ally, Jordan, had been attacked. The incident was used by Arabs to condemn Jordan as it had consistently refused the deployment of Iraqi or Saudi forces on its territory to avoid being forced into a war with Israel, and also as a defensive condemnation of Egypt by Jordan, and Egypt by Syria as Nasser kept hiding behind the deployment of UNEF in Sinai as an excuse for not taking action.

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[79] Amer's report was incorporated in Heikal, *The Explosion*, pp.1000-1004.

The second incident was when the IAF ambushed Syrian jets and downed six of them on the April 1967.[80] In April and May, direct threats to subvert the regime in Damascus were common in Israeli propaganda.

In 1967, the roots of the conflict in the Middle East reached a critical state: Nasser's image as a "hero" obliged him to bear the responsibility to act. The Arab Cold War represented a means and a result for the strife with the US. The Israeli issue was used by Nasser's regime and the nationalist regimes in Syria and Iraq to outbid each another in threats and promises to act. The borders and small water wars increased the tension. Finally, this critical situation was exacerbated by Israel' explicit threats against the Syrian regime, the credibility of which was raised by Soviet false alarms about IDF deployments at the Syrian border.

The Strategic Ability of Israel

Conceptual

The Israeli cabinet was formed by the Mapai Party in alliance with smaller parties (Ahdot HaAvoda and the National Religious Party) and was headed by Levi Eshkol. The contrast between his strategic conceptual ability and that of Ben-Gurion was massive.[81] Eshkol had undertaken only limited military service during WWI and had been isolated from the security circle in Israel since its establishment. He was portrayed in Israel, especially when the conflict was heated in May 1967, as a weak old man with stuttering speech who lacked the qualities needed for the historic moment.

Although Eshkol did not have a strong grasp of military strategic issues, he emphasised on many occasions the need to subject military conduct and operations to international political sensitivities. In spite of the crisis and the continuing pressure from the IDF to go to war, he stated prophetically in the most serious meeting with his generals, “A military victory would not end the dispute because the Arabs will still be there”.[82]

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[80] Ritchie Ovendale, *The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars* (London: Routledge, 2004) p. 205.

[81] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.8-10; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.166.

He tried to compensate for his shortcomings in military strategy by seeking advice from Yigal Allon who was a great operational artist in 1948 and thoroughly formulated the Israeli strategic concepts in the 1950s and 1960s, at least on paper, in “The Making of Israel’s Army”. Allon was a good reader, and broadcaster in Israel, of Liddell Hart’s theory of an indirect approach. His account of how the 1948 operations followed this approach, albeit in its operational and tactical senses, was incorporated in late editions of Hart’s book.[83] Allon referred later to the weak theoretical base of the IDF officers’ corps, meaning primarily in the tactical and operational areas, and recommended formal theoretical education and independent self-development for officers.[84]

In “The Making of Israel’s Army”, Allon stressed the strategic necessity to avert war as far as possible, to win wars decisively and in a short time using air supremacy and armoured thrusts, and to transfer the war to the enemy’s territory.[85]

Due to Israeli geostrategic sensitivities (as it was surrounded by Arabs whose artillery range covered the sensitive areas in Galilee, and had a limited strategic depth of 10 miles at some points)[86], he coined a new term, albeit self-contradictory as he was aware of this charge: “anticipatory counter-attack”. Israel should set red lines and be ready to attack offensively if these lines were breached. He claimed that the core of the military thinking of Israel and her allies[87] was defensive strategically but offensive operationally. These red lines, which would result in an Israeli counter-attack, were: concentration of enemy forces with offensive intent, guerrilla wars not controllable by low scale retaliations, any closure of the Tiran Straits, and impending deep air attacks on Israeli territory.[88]

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[82] Quoted in Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, p. 228.

[83] Liddell Hart, *Strategy: The Indirect Approach* (London: Penguin, 1991) p.401.

[84] Allon, “*A Curtain of Sand”* (Hebrew) cited in Avi Kober, “What Happened to Israeli Military Thought?”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol **34**:5, 707-732.

[85] Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel’s Army* (London: Sphere Books, 1971) pp.69-80.

[86] Michael Handel, “The Evolution of Israeli Strategy” in Williamson Murray et al, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) pp.537-538.

Although his strategic encapsulation was offensive and tacticized, Allon grasped the essence of strategic thinking by looking for the strategic and political effects of the use of force.

He believed in the possibility of reaching a peace agreement but, more likely, a non-aggression agreement after both the 1948 and 1956 wars, but he did not explain what went wrong to prevent this. He also perceived the qualitative gap as favouring Israel over the Arabs in the long term, which makes a defensive strategy more reasonable, albeit with a low threshold for offensive actions. He favoured conventional deterrence over nuclear, unless Israel benefited from unilateral nuclear capability, as the opponent's actions could not be counted upon for mutual nuclear deterrence to work.[89]

Nevertheless, Allon did not have broad access to strategy making in this war. Granted, he was a minister with advisory ties to Eshkol, but even Eshkol did not show willingness to formulate strategy on top of what was produced by the IDF. At one time Eshkol proposed to allot his defence portfolio to Allon, but this was not accepted. Only if Allon had been accepted as defence minister would he have had sufficient authority to guide strategy making. The only direct input he managed was as a minister of the minority party Ahdot HaAfoda who adopted a very active policy from the beginning of the crisis, pushing the cabinet towards the decision to go to war, but he was not responsible for any detailed strategy.

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[87] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy, p.541. Two out of Allon's six points of casus belli were: closing the Tiran Passage, and the deployment of other Arab forces in Jordan or the West Bank. Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army*, p.79.

[88] Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army,* pp.69-80.

[89] Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army*, pp.76-79.

The IDF pressed for a political leadership change by bringing Ben-Gurion, Eshkol's rival, into the government as Minister of Defence. In the end, a compromise was reached by establishing a government of unity in which Dayan became defence minister

Moshe Dayan, despite his legendary status in Israeli military history, had only modest qualities as an operational organiser[90], let alone as a strategist, and he lacked much of the organizing ability needed for the post. Dayan's best quality, nevertheless, was the high esteem in which he was held and his ability to mobilize his subordinates to follow his lead.

Dayan, who did not receive any formal higher military education, showed mixed strategic conceptual ability. On the one hand, he clearly appreciated the political and strategic consequences of military operations, for example criticising the escalatory policy of the IDF that led to the crisis, and the IDF's underestimation of Nasser's intention to go to war in response. He also gave good strategic accounts of the fall of Gaza once its base in Rafah- Al Arish was stripped, of the need not to reach as far as the Suez Canal in order to avoid international pressure, and of his opposition opening a Golan front to avoid the prospect of Soviet intervention.[91]

On the other hand, his accounts did not show that he grasped the full strategic logic of using force to reach clear political aims that have to be enforced on the will of the enemy; neither did he demonstrate determination to impose his will on events. Dayan did not offer a strategic formula for the war, but only worked uncritically inside the well-accepted IDF strategic concepts in the Sixties.

There had been structural anomalies in Israel's strategic conceptual ability from 1948 to 1956 and then in 1967. Although extensive doctrinal discussions took place during the 1950s and 1960s, there was a lack of formal means to develop and transfer strategic, or even operational, theory. Hence, the discussions ended up being practical-technical debates and did not benefit from deeper and critical thinking. Theory does not make doctrine, but it increases the general awareness of the subject and sharpens the line between important and less important issues, between what is changing and what is not. Strategic theory and its product, strategic assumptions, are essential also to give the doctrine its *raison d'être* and its shape and direction. As Avi Kober clearly identified, this "anti-intellectualism" in the IDF originated in the cultural bias towards practical experience that was entrenched by the cult of victorious offensives in the 1956 and, to an even greater extent, the 1967 wars.[92]

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[90] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* p.148.

[91] Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976) pp.287-307.

The attempt to establish a National Defence College in 1963 was not successful. The college did not receive the attention of the IDF elites and became a pool for the non-motivated senior military. It was closed shortly before 1967 to save expenses during an economic slowdown.[93] The college was only re-established after 1973 as a response to the general condemnation of Israeli military practice before and during the 1973 war.[94]

If anything had changed in 1967 from the previous wars, it was the absence of Ben-Gurion's strategic input with his clear concepts of strategic logic and the political employment of war.[95] Also, as the IDF became much more mechanised and professional, in tactical and technical terms, the sense of anti-intellectualism was strengthened not weakened. As the military elites became more specialised in narrow and sophisticated tasks, the influence of the wider operational talent of the earlier generations was weakened. Moreover, as the IDF adopted state of the art platforms and more emphasis was put on technical excellence, the conceptual elements in thinking strategically were lost to what Handel called in describing the IDF: "capital-intensive warfare"[96].

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[92] Avi Kober, "The Intellectual and Modern Focus in Israeli Military Thinking as Reflected in Ma'arachot Articles 1948-2000," *Armed Forces & Society* (Vol **30**, Issue 1, Fall 2003) pp. 141-160.

[93] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.189.

[94] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 251.

[95] Cohen*, Supreme Command*pp.133-170.

The direct consequence of this loss in strategic ability was clear. No real attempt was made to reconsider the long-term strategic consequences of using the acts of war comprehensively, nor was there an overview of the pattern of military decisions. Yet, some strategic considerations were made, albeit not comprehensively. Although this can be interpreted to some extent by the anomalous institutional trend skewed to the military, both military and cabinet debates showed little interest in asking strategic questions let alone attempting to answer them. **All this gives the Israeli Conceptual tier low marks**.

Institutional

With the demise of Ben-Gurion who had emphasised the instrumentalism of the military to policy[97], the institutional structure of strategy making lost much of the legacy of civilian supremacy and strong political leadership. However, in spite of the IDF's strong ties with the 'Old Man', it welcomed Eshkol as he had a much more relaxed grip over the military.[98]

A conflict of opinions between the military and political elites peaked before the 1967 War as the military always pushed for offensives. Firstly, they pushed for a military offensive against the Syrian front, ranging from wide-scale retaliatory attacks to overthrowing the regime, which would have required an invasion and the possible occupation of Damascus. The military always exceeded the limits set by Eshkol in retaliatory events, as in Samau in 1966 and in the aerial battle in April 1967.[99]

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[96] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy", p. 172.

[97] Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006) pp. 23-25.

[98] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp. 14-21.

[99] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp. 40-48.

Then, when the conflict with Egypt was building, the military pushed for action as early as 15 May 1967. Between then and the government's decision to go to war, both informally on 2 June1967, and formally on 4 June 1967, the military pressured the politicians by various means to unleash Israel's military might without investigating the political objectives thoroughly.

Although the IDF kept itself subordinated to the political elites, even in the harshest rift between 24 May and 2 June 1967, when the government ordered the military to wait for the completion of diplomatic manoeuvres, the military pushed by legitimate or illegitimate means to the extent that the fear of a military coup came to Ben-Gurion's infuriated notice and forced him to reconsider his opposition to a national unity government, and this led to the appointment of Dayan as defence minister.[100] How could the military achieve this pressure, and how could this have affected the functional criteria of institutionalising strategy making?

The military had a much stronger hold on the decision-making framework than in any other democracy, and it used the stream of conflict itself to strengthen its position. The Chief of Staff, Rabin, had semi-ministerial status until his breakdown on 24 May 1967, and he attended all governmental security meetings, accompanying mostly the heads of military intelligence and operations. This, in addition to the absence of any civilian-led platform for thorough discussions on strategy making, the absence of any civilian-led platform for collecting and developing genuine intelligence reports, the weakness of Eshkol and most of his cabinet members in military affairs (other than Allon, Carmel and later Dayan, who were strongly in support of IDF activism) and the stronger public base of the military in general, all led to more compliance with what the military wished for, especially in the critical window.

This compliance was reached by "smooth" ways of persuasion and manipulating intelligence reports and by harsh ways too. The aggressive speeches of the general staff in their meetings with Eshkol on 23 and 28 May and 1 June 1967 and with the government on 2 June, which challenged the credibility of the government[101], the furious mood of the armed forces due to the government waiting for a diplomatic pathway, and the military's participation in inflaming public feelings against the government, and Eshkol specifically, and their attempts to get Dayan into office were some examples.

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[100] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.207-8.

Because of this it is helpful to survey how these abnormal *relational* settings, in a generally democratic political structure, affected the *functional* criteria in both positive and negative ways.

Information sharing was good in general, but the process had two failings which enabled manipulation of the flow of intelligence on the enemy's capabilities and intentions. On the other hand information on the IDF's capabilities was generally accurate.

Firstly, all sources of intelligence were collected and reviewed by military intelligence which was under the Chief of Staff. This created a "legitimate" way to affect decision making by shaping the perception of political elites. With such a military-centric intelligence system, introducing military biases was inevitable and involuntary; however the military manipulated the intelligence reports intentionally to draw a more compelling picture.

For example, Aron Yariv, the chief of military intelligence, in his meetings with Eshkol and the government, stressed Nasser's clearly offensive intentions and the grave outcomes if he was given time to act in Sinai without a military response from Israel. When these reports were shown to the Americans during the visits of both Aba-Eban and then Yariv, they were considered an exaggeration of Nasser's intentions and capabilities. What American and Israeli reports agreed, nevertheless, was the likely favourable outcome for the IDF in any future military operation against Arab forces, separately or combined.[102]

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[101] Full accounts were transmitted in Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.153-154, 160-168, 196-202 & 223-231.

[102] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.241- 243.

The second fault in the intelligence system was the trend of Israeli military intelligence to suggest policies and strategies based on its estimate of the enemy's intentions. Suggesting specific policy/strategy, however, is outside the capability of intelligence organisations and is strategically counterproductive, especially in democratic settings. Intelligence, specifically military intelligence, does not have the political legitimacy or efficiency to monitor and control all forms of state capabilities, diplomatic, economic, domestic, external etc. Hence, any attempt by military intelligence alone to formulate a policy and strategy is inefficient. Also, conveying the militarized inclination towards policy and strategy without it being critically scrutinized by a higher political judgement contradicts the logic of strategy making.

Nevertheless, what military and other intelligence should do is to draw potential scenarios and modify the intelligence strategy and agenda in order to deal with these scenarios beforehand, by providing the available information required for decisions in such scenarios. [103]

If the government adopts a specific policy/strategy, intelligence may prioritize its agenda but should not give up completely the consideration of other scenarios. Nor should it advocate a specific policy/strategy. If intelligence does push for a specific strategy, or having a solid strategic assumption "concept", information can also be gathered in a way to consolidate these assumptions rather than challenging them. This meticulous process is what could draw a sharp line between policy-driven versus policy-relevant intelligence.[104]

What happened in Israeli practice in three major events prior to May 1967, during the crisis window before the 1967 War, and before the 1973 War was a cognitive deadlock when the intelligence generated some **concepts** which dominated policy/strategy making due to their high position in the system. The intelligence community then kept feeding these concepts with compatible evidences while distorting or ignoring other opposing evidences.[105]

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[103] A discussion with Mr John Morrison on the side-line of "Strategy: Theory and Practice" seminar, Reading University, June 2013.

[104] I owe these terms to Professor Colin Gray.

The second functional criterion, **collective critical thinking,** was severely affected. Although military and political meetings adopted the norm of critical thinking, they did that in isolation, not collectively and, in the case of the military, were cognitively attached to fixed strategic concept and offensive attitudes.

There was no institutional forum to deal thoroughly with policy/strategy questions which could include people from both civilian and military backgrounds in a free critical environment.[106] Although the cabinet and its ministerial security committee could have constituted this platform, both fell short of its requirements. The majority of members lacked military knowledge, apart from the IDF representatives or those who were aligned with them, and this made IDF assumptions immune to criticism.

Also, neither of these bodies, whose meetings were held infrequently and were occupied mostly with non-policy non-strategic questions, discussed the points of the political aims of the war or the military strategy and operational plans. This was, in part, caused by the time and background limits, but it was caused also by the *en Berra* status which represented this war as a war of "no choice"; it was an aim in itself, and everything more than the decision to go to war was left to the military.[107] Eshkol was presented informally with the *Karadom* plan at his personal meeting with Rabin on 22 May, and Dayan only knew about the actual *Nakhshonim* plan when he came into the office.[108]

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[105] Chaim Herzog, *War of Atonement: The Inside Story of the Yom Kippur War* (Oxford: Casemate, 2010) pp.40-55; Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep: The Surprise of Yom Kippur and its Sources* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005) pp. 45-53.

[106] Gluska, *The Israeli Military.*

[107] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.125-126.

[108] Gluska, *The Israeli Military,* pp. 147-151. The details of these plans will be discussed later.

The **authorization of political elites** to take political and strategic decisions was accepted by the military with two reservations, in addition to the pressure on politicians by the military to go to war:[109]

First, political decisions were restricted to the question of whether or not to go to war; neither decisions nor guidance were offered for the war's political objectives, its military strategy, or scale of operations and limitations.

Second, decisions were applied mostly in the period leading to war, on a wider scale than the government authorized, as in the case of Samau and the aerial exchange.[110] The last anomaly was common in the pre-war retaliatory actions but it happened also in the only episode when a politician, Dayan, spoke against seizing control of the Gaza Strip and reaching the Suez Canal and found his reservations ignored. In contrast, but also an institutional defect, Dayan ordered the occupation of the Golan Heights on 9 June contradicting the Security Committee's decision on the previous night not to invade Syrian territory in order to avoid possible Soviet intervention.[111]

Given the conflict of opinions and the balance of power skewed towards the military, the theoretical model created by Brooks would give the Israeli case in the 1967 War the worst functional outcomes.[112] However, in the event the Israeli civil-military relations showed mixed functional outcomes. The conflict of opinions between politicians and generals in this case was not a competition over political power. There was still a democratic legacy preserving some functions.

The military commitment to democracy was strong enough because of the Israeli politico-social architecture in which the army was a people's army mainly of reservists, and society as a whole was strongly committed to democracy. With no interest in extending its political power for its own sake, the military had no interest in hiding information or distorting its own capability.

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[109] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.229-233.

[110] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, p.40-47.

[111] Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Oakland CA: The University of California Press, 1996) p. 155.

[112] Risa Brooks, *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

The capabilities of the Arabs were also hard to hide completely because of the multiplicity of sources examining them, especially those from the US. What undermined Israeli strategic practice was its assertive and biased estimation of Arab intentions and its adherence to a consolidated strategic concept, pushing for a specific policy by whatever means, together with the military monopoly on strategy making. This monopoly was rather the result of the withdrawal of the politicians than the political activism of the military. With this monopoly, militarization and tacticization of strategy making were to be expected.

These mixed functions and abnormal relational setting (competent information sharing and formidable position of the military; moderate grade in clear authorization; and low critical assessment and strategic intervention of politicians) give the Israeli institutional layer a grade of **medium**.

Practical

Israeli policy/grand strategy in the 1967 War can be analysed from different perspectives: the clarity of political aims and the compatibility between them and the chosen grand strategy, and the grand strategic ability to orchestrate all means of state power to attain the end results. The decision to go to war is grand strategic and the decisions on the type of war will be called military strategic, although in reality they are mutually interdependent as described earlier.

Israel achieved a high level of success in mobilizing the state means for the military effort, due to its mature governmental and social infrastructure and the compelling sense of necessity in the population. From a population of 2.5 million in 1967, Israel could mobilize 250,000, an army which was very well served economically and technically. However, all other state means, such as diplomacy for example, were seen as auxiliary means at best to serve the military; most of the time the IDF saw diplomacy as an obstacle rather than being integrated to serve higher strategy targets.[113]

Pre-war. The overarching security concept in Israel after the 1956 War until 1967 was based on the pillars of conventional deterrence and preserving the military's ability to achieve successful pre-emptive offenses.[114] The first of these in turn relied on an approach of limited retaliation that would not exceed escalatory limits and lead to war, and on the qualitative edge of the military over its potential enemies. [115]The second pillar was based on the ability to have early warning and peripheral *NAHAL* (settlements)[116] to give time for the military to mobilize and launch highly dynamic thrusts by attaining and then using air supremacy and armoured mobile offensives.

Nuclear deterrence, for reasons of technical underdevelopment, was deferred to the future. However, a policy of nuclear ambiguity "Amimut" was adopted before and after attaining nuclear capacity to prevent international pressure and the Arabs' claiming their own right to obtain nuclear weapons which would distort Israel's deterrence ability. It also relied on this ambiguity creating Arab fears of initiating conflict with an enemy possibly armed with nuclear weapons.[117]

Creveld indicated that this nuclear ambiguity had prevented the Arabs before 1967 from calculating the outcomes of using war properly and had restrained their escalation since they had believed that Israel possessed some nuclear capacity at the time. In spite of no formal evidence that Israel was nuclear-ready before 1967, Creveld concluded from the remark by Peres that there was a "certain proposal that I cannot write about for reasons of state security" and if Israel adopted it the Arabs would be deterred, that he meant a nuclear trial.[118] Nevertheless, given the personalities of Arab leaders, the regional heating up, the Cold War dynamics, and the Arab popular feeling in response to escalatory propaganda, it was doubtful that this step would calm down the escalation but heat it further.

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[113] Jill Merom, "The Architecture and Soft Spots of Israeli Grand Strategy", in Lee and Walling (eds), *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality: Essays in Honour of Michael Handel* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[114] Allon, *The Making of the Israel's Army.*

[115] Ze'ev Drory, *Israel's Reprisal Policy 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliations* (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

[116] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy", pp. 538-598.

[117] Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) pp.195-219.

Although the security concept described above looked wise and productive, its defective application, due to institutional aberrations discussed earlier and the expansionist and offensive culture in the military, led to the failure of deterrence.

In Eshkol's initial meetings with the General Staff in 1963, the military expressed its thoughts about correcting the borders (errors), mainly in the West Bank and also of the Golan which represented a potential danger to Israel's geostrategic situation. Rabin acknowledged at these meetings that this area of decision making lay exclusively in the sphere of the politicians, but this did not allay the strong military concern about the issue and led to extensive retaliations. [119] This, in turn, rather than preserving the security *status quo* and strengthening deterrence, invited the crisis of May 1967 that preceded the war.

These incidents were even condemned by Dayan who, as a Member of the Knesset, warned against pushing the region to war. This military activism was accelerated by Eshkol's, Abba Eban's and Rabin's threats of crippling the Damascus regime that dominated April and May 1967. Rabin met Ben Gurion, the sacred patron of the army, on 21 May and the latter condemned the military attitude and described it as playing with the country's fate.[120]

Another sign of failure which marked the build-up to the crisis was the solid certainty spread by military intelligence that Nasser would never go to war or threaten war due to the military imbalance and his entanglement in Yemen. The bland acceptance of this gave the military and the political decision makers a false sense of security regarding their escalatory moves and the possibility that Egypt would not respond.

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[118] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* p. 175.

[119] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, p. 18.

[120] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, p. 18.

Grand Strategy was also problematic during the 1967 crisis, although it was better than before and had some excuse with the catastrophic mistakes made by Nasser. War aims were never set or discussed in Israeli political or military circles and no compatibility was meticulously sought between policy, the assumed one at least, and strategy.

It could be said that the mood of "war of no choice" was facilitated by the political and military discourses which *intentionally* obscured the balance of power that favoured Israel in order to achieve domestic and international mobilization. Secondly, this was helped by the escalatory speeches of Nasser and other Arab leaders. Thirdly, the lack of effective international intervention in the crisis also led to a sense that the war should be fought without a greater strategic design.

However, this also was precipitated by the Israeli cultural mindset. Due to the Holocaust and 2000 years in diaspora, there was a continuous search for absolute security with exaggerated and pre-emptive response.[121] Shalit claimed a link between the two contradictory patterns of Israeli practice; fear and aggression as Zionism sought to replace the image of weakness and humiliation with an image of power and aggression.[122]

Nevertheless, as a matter of fact, all internal estimates by the military, like those of the US[123], clearly stated the wide quality gap between the IDF and the Egyptian Army and predicted a subsequent battle-space decision, which should normally work against this *en barr* atmosphere.

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[121] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy", pp. 542-544.

[122] Erel Shalit, "The Relationship between Aggression and Fear of Annihilation in Israel", *Political Psychology*, Vol. **15**, No. 3 (Sept, 1994) pp. 415-434.

[123] For example, National Intelligence Estimates 30-67, *The Arab Israeli Dispute: The Current Phase* (Lindon Johnson Administration , April 1967).

The decision to go to war was made under the direct pressure of the Army to do "something big" militarily in response to Israel's deteriorating deterrent position and Nasser's miscalculated moves. There was no further detailed formulation of war policy and strategy. This was obvious from the frequent and rapid shifting in Israeli military thinking from an offensive pattern to another with a limited strategic consideration.

No meeting of the cabinet or its defence committee and no combined political-military meeting was held specifically to discuss, let alone criticise, the political aims of the war or to select political-military scenarios for actions which would help to achieve them.[124] Only within the military was there concrete discussion; the General Staff reviewed the military options, but without discussing the political and strategic effects of each or how these effects would meet political goals set by the civilian government. The only vague strategic assumption held by the military from the early days of the crisis was that the Egyptians should receive a hammer blow in order to restore Israel's deterrence posture. Later, detailed military plans were the fruit of pure operational analysis of the current balance of power and the possibilities of offensive action.

The offensive/militarized quasi-policy that was held by the military did not speak to **specific political aims.** Was the aim defensive against a possible Egyptian offensive, with or without Syrian involvement, to re-open the Tiran Straits, to restore Israel's deterrence capacity or to cripple Nasser's regime? This was never clearly decided.

From 14 May, the policy tacitly adopted by the military was to punish Nasser in order to restore the deterrence position of Israel. This desire to deal with Egypt was strengthened by the withdrawal of UNEF as a buffer in the Sinai, and was confirmed by Cairo's closing of the Tiran Straits which since 1956 had been considered clearly and openly as a definite *casus belli*.

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[124] Gluska, *The Israeli Military,* p.257.

The political circle, on the other hand, was full of ideas ranging from an extreme offensive policy to merely restoring the status quo and pressuring for the opening of the Tiran Straits by diplomatic measures.[125] As a response to the 14 May Egyptian build-up in Sinai, the Israeli military was given an order for partial mobilization which was turned to full mobilization after the Tiran closure on 23 May. International diplomacy was seen as a failure by the Israelis as it had not prevented the UNEF withdrawal or stopped Nasser's closure of the Tiran Straits.

When the UN Secretary General visited Egypt on 24 May, a moratorium was agreed whereby Israel would not send a ship with its flag and Egypt would stop military measures for inspecting and controlling the Strait. More importantly, the US promised Israel to launch a naval armada to open the Strait for Israeli shipping.

The cabinet decided to allow a window for diplomacy to act on the Tiran Affair and restrained the military during the last two weeks in May. Although Eshkol did not turn down the military option, he and his cabinet believed that diplomatic moves would preserve the position of Israel as a victim of Arab aggression which would legitimize any later offensive. Further, the cabinet aimed to preserve relations with the US which were critically needed for military support during the oncoming war and in any post-war situation to enhance Israel's international position and transform the military gains into political ones, which had not happened in 1956.[126]

The cabinet sent Abba Eban to the US on 26 May and used his visit to restrain the military push for offensive action. However, in the last week of May four new developments reduced the cabinet resistance to the military.

Firstly, the military provided updated and consecutive strategic estimates which were compelling because of the alarm they raised. The estimates' purpose was: to illuminate Israel's deteriorated deterrence position as Nasser moved from one escalatory position to another if Israel did not respond; to focus on the Egyptian build-up in Sinai with arms on the ground and in the air; to show how this build-up would make any future Israeli offensive difficult and costly; and lastly to indicate the seismic regional changes that would follow Nasser's success as evidenced by the Egyptian-Jordanian military treaty which put the Jordanian forces under Egyptian military command and permitted the transfer of Iraqi forces to Jordan.[127]

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[125] Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) pp.331-349.

[126] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp. 196-198 & pp. 227-228.

Secondly, the formation of the National Unity Government and the allocation of the defence portfolio to Dayan changed the balance in the cabinet in favour of the decision for war.

Thirdly, the cabinet became convinced that the US-led naval armada would be a failure.

Finally, the changes in the region, especially on the Jordanian front, encouraged the government to make the decision. Even Eban, who more than any other minister was convinced of the need to maintain the status quo and leave as wide a scope for diplomacy as possible, changed his mind after the Egyptian-Jordanian defence treaty.

On the 2 June, the Ministerial Security Committee, which now included Dayan from Rafi and representatives from Gahal, decided to go to war and to send Amir Amit to the US for a final approach to gain US support and acknowledgement. Although feedback from the State Department urged more patience and restraint, the message from the President and the US military was encouraging. [128]

Exploring the US position towards the crisis and any possible Israeli response had pre-occupied the cabinet for some time and was seen by the military and the public as a sign of incompetence. Although the US State Department had advocated diplomacy throughout the crisis, the position of the President and the security community changed from calling for self-restraint at the beginning of the conflict to maintain some level of peace in the Middle East and decrease potential tension with the USSR, especially given the US involvement in Vietnam, to one of permitting an Israeli action in order to withstand a regional cascade which would leave US allies and interests exposed.

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[127] The military proposals for their meeting with Eshkol in the pit were summarized in Gluska, *The Israeli Military,* pp.223-231.

[128] William Quant, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001) p. 35-44. Steven Spiegel, *The Other Arab Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, From Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) pp. 140-148.

Even the State Department, despite its usual modest policy tone, advised Johnson in a letter on 4 June from Walt Rostow that "the moderate Arabs - and, in fact, virtually all Arabs who fear the rise of Nasser as a result of this crisis – would prefer to have him cut down by the Israelis rather than by external forces"[129]

An analysis of the US role in the 1967 War shows, however, that two extreme positions cannot be supported by strong evidence. The war was not a US-initiated conspiracy but the US did, despite its protestations, play a role in paving the way to war by its deceitful interactions with Nasser.

Arabs have claimed that the war was precipitated mainly by the US and even that the Americans participated physically in the war itself.[130] In defence of their own conduct, 'Amer and his staff tried to convince Nasser that US fighters had participated in the attack but later both said this was not so.[131] Nasser himself for some time spoke publicly on this supposed participation.

In his extensive study of the war Heikal tried hard to create a sophisticated story about an inner circle of the US government which conspired with a similar circle in Israel in order to cripple Nasser's regime and occupy the West Bank. He also claimed that the US supported the Israeli war machinery with massive weaponry before the war and controlled the sky over Israel during the aerial offensives.[132] The Egyptian Chief of Staff claimed that the US technical research ship Liberty was responsible for electronic and counter-electronic warfare in favour of Israel[133]; Heikal, on the other hand, claimed that the ship's role was to spy on the Israeli war effort against the US's ally in the West Bank – the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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[129] Quoted in Gluska, p. 245 (FRUS vol.19, Doc. 117)

[130] Elie Podeh, "The Lie That Won't Die: Collusion, 1967", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol **11**, No 1, Winter 2004.

[131] Heikal, *The Explosion,* pp.728-9.

[132] Heikal, *The Explosion,* pp. 728-750.

All these claims are contradicted by long cascades of evidence showing that the US was reluctant until the last moment to "unleash" Israel and then then gave only an "amber" light, implicitly allowing the offensive but not being involved in it. The USS Liberty was attacked later by the IAF by mistake as was originally claimed,[134] and spying on the war effort against Jordan would not have necessitated this sophisticated tool. The IDF, although it had wished for long time to correct the "historical fault" in its borders by occupying the West Bank, was clearly identifying its main focus as the thrust into the Sinai as its deployment showed, rather than into the West Bank or the Golan Heights. The chance to occupy Jordanian territory came with the Jordanian tactical offensives launched despite conciliatory messages from Israel, and the IDF seized the chance. The controversial decision to occupy Golan was taken late in the war on 9 June 1967.

US policy towards Nasser was at its harshest in the period preceding the war. This policy, which continuously shifted from attempts to contain him to covert activities, as plans Alpha and Gamma showed,[135] had reached its peak of confrontation under Johnson and in 1966 specifically.

"Unleashing Israel" was a recognised theme in the background of US policy[136], but during the May crisis the US was cautious about any escalation which would allow more Soviet penetration of the region. However, once the regional cascade was in the process of building up, and the USSR did not take as rigid a position as it had in

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[133] Fawzy, *Three Years War,* p.136.

[134] The final investigative outcome in the US linked the mistaken attack to a bureaucratic blunder in the Sixth Fleet, where the Israeli warning to get US ships away from the Israeli coast so as not to be mistaken for an Egyptian vessel was delayed in reaching Liberty. Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 110.

[135] Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967*, pp.8-10.

[136] Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967*, p.150; Avi Shlaim, 'The Middle East: The Origins of Arab-Israeli Wars' in Ngaire Woods, ed., *Explaining International Relations since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

1956, and intelligence estimates were predicting a clear Israeli victory, Washington reoriented its position to permit an Israeli offensive.

But even when the US became certain about the impending Israeli offensive, Washington kept advising Nasser to exercise self-restraint and scheduled a visit from Zakarya Mohey-Alddin, his prime minister, on 7 June one day after the invasion.[137]

The US modified its procurement policy towards Israel in 1962 when Kennedy agreed to provide air defence systems – Hawks - to Israel as a response to the Egyptian rocket project. The US also supported Israel with M-48 tanks, though through Germany rather than directly, and agreed before the crisis to provide her directly with M-48 tanks and 40 Sky Hawks, although these failed to reach Israel in time for the war; however, the US turned down Israeli requests for rocket systems.[138]

In conclusion, the US had a facilitating and supporting role in the war, rather than a precipitating one. From the Israeli strategic perspective, Ben-Gurion's original strategic speculation proved correct: that US strategic guardianship would prove indispensable in enhancing Israel's fighting power and international position.[139] However, the ultimate success in this grand strategic target was secured by his political opponent, Eshkol.

On 4 June, the Israeli cabinet agreed to permit the military to proceed with operations to avert the encirclement of Israel, no more than that. No political aims, strategic objective or compatible military strategy and principles for operations were sanctioned.

Post-war Israeli policy and grand strategy were no better. With an astonishing military victory that impressed the world, Israel found herself in an end-state that had neither been anticipated nor planned for.

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[137] Heikal, *The Explosion*, p.686; Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.245-246.

[138] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.29-32.

[139] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, p.27.

Egyptian military forces received a shattering defeat with more than 15-20,000 killed and 4000 taken prisoner. [140] The IDF reached the Suez Canal and Nasser was badly humiliated. With this end-state Egypt accepted the ceasefire with reluctance on 8 June and asked for an unconditional retreat of the IDF. On the other side, Israel matched this unrealistic demand with a similar one in a short-lived offer; Israel would retreat but as part of a general peace agreement with border changes.

The diplomatic still-birth of the ceasefire negotiations paved the way for many hidden ideological and geopolitical instincts to flourish in Israel -- the Right pushed for an expansionist Greater Israel while others promoted holding on to the Occupied Territories to widen Israel's geostrategic space.[141]

The USSR, criticised during the war for its lack of support for its regional allies, worked hard to restore the Egyptian Army and push for an international diplomatic solution based on the UN Resolution 242.[142]

As a final remark on the soundness of Israeli policy/grand strategy in the war, if the assumed aim was to restore the deterrence position or to ensure a long period of no-war, the result was two protracted wars: the War of Attrition and the 1973 War.

Military Strategy

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[140] The lower number is from Arab sources, such as Fawzy and Gamasy. The higher number is from

Chaim Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East from the 1948 War of Independence to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005) p.165.

[141] As Gluska indicated in *The Israeli Military*, the role of unity government with high weight for Dayan and the Right was decisive in this diplomatic deadlock especially at the Jordanian front (pp.259-260). Also, as Rabin indicated, after the agreement with Dayan not to attack Syria on 8 June, the latter changed his mind and ordered the North Commander to occupy the Golan in the early morning. Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, pp.115-116.

[142] Nigel Ashton, *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers 1967-73* (London: Routledge, 2007) pp.28-29 & p.61.

If policy and grand strategy were chaotic and simply left to the natural accumulation of the outcomes of military operations, military strategy was also problematic.

The IDF aimed at defeating the Egyptian and other Arab forces by destroying their air and air-defence machinery first and then breaking through enemy defences, which were mostly static, by armoured pushes supported by Air and Special Forces. A direct onslaught would then follow.

However, translating this concept into a specific strategic formula by giving it the scale and characters that would achieve the required strategic effects was absent.

The IDF was the main decision-maker of strategic orientation in the conflict as already discussed, and if the military adopted a policy of punishing Nasser's army militarily, neither the range of punishment nor the appropriate military actions were discussed thoroughly with political leaders. The strategy making was upside-down.

Eshkol, as mentioned, was aware of the risky path of using a military victory to reshape the political post-war structure. Despite his concerns, he and his colleagues were rarely involved in discussing military operations, let alone deciding on them, apart from expressing his fear of occupying Gaza given the likely difficulties in sustaining it.

Plans. The Israeli pre-war planning was distilled in Plan *Sadan* which involved an initial ground-air defensive operation with forces transferring between the three potential fronts depending on where the primary thrust came from, with more priority given to the West Bank than the Golan Heights due to their geostrategic sensitivity.[143]

When the crisis commenced on 14 May 1967, the General Staff proceeded to plan its offensive with no demarcation line between planning possible scenarios and adopting and pushing for a specific plan for action.

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[143] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, p.144.

The first planning idea was a very limited offensive to occupy the Gaza Strip and use it as a bargaining chip for the Egyptian deployments in the Sinai and the re-opening of the Tiran Straits. This was turned down by the military leadership and Eshkol.

The next idea was formally incorporated in Plan *Kardom* (axe). This proposed destroying the Egyptian forces in Sinai by a major enveloping thrust from the southern Sinai sector composed of an armoured division/*ugda*, holding the middle sector with another *ugda* and using a third *ugda* as a functional reserve to repel any serious Egyptian defensive manoeuvres. The ground operation was to be preceded in all cases by an air operation which would destroy Egyptian air and air-defences capabilities; this was laid out in the IAF Plan *Moked*.[144]

As Rabin was under pressure from the Cabinet to either wait for diplomatic negotiations or engage in limited military actions that would still allow for such manoeuvres, he ordered the staff on 20 May to prepare another limited plan for the occupation of the Gaza Strip and an offensive in the northern Sinai area of Rafah-Al-Arish, preceded as usual by gaining air supremacy through Plan *Moked*.[145] A Plan *Atzmon* was created to fulfil this scenario but was rejected outright by the military and the comprehensive Plan *Karadom* remained the main template.[146]

Both proposed plans gave the green light for a deep breakthrough into the Sinai. Nevertheless, as a precaution, orders were issued to occupy Sharm Al-Sheikh as soon as possible in order to have a solid gain in case of an early ceasefire.[147]

In response to the Egyptians sending their most effective armoured division (the Fourth) to Sinai, a combined plan was developed known as *Nakhshonim*. According to this plan, Egyptian forces would be destroyed by three thrusts; the main one in the northern Sinai, a holding one in the middle, and Yoffe's division between them passing the difficult terrain of sand dunes in order to deal with any rapid Egyptian armoured thrusts from strategic or deep operational reserves. By this big enveloping manoeuvre, the Egyptian forces would be annihilated. (Figure 1)

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[144] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.147-151.

[145] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.147-151.

[146] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.147-151.

[147] Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs,* pp. 103-106.

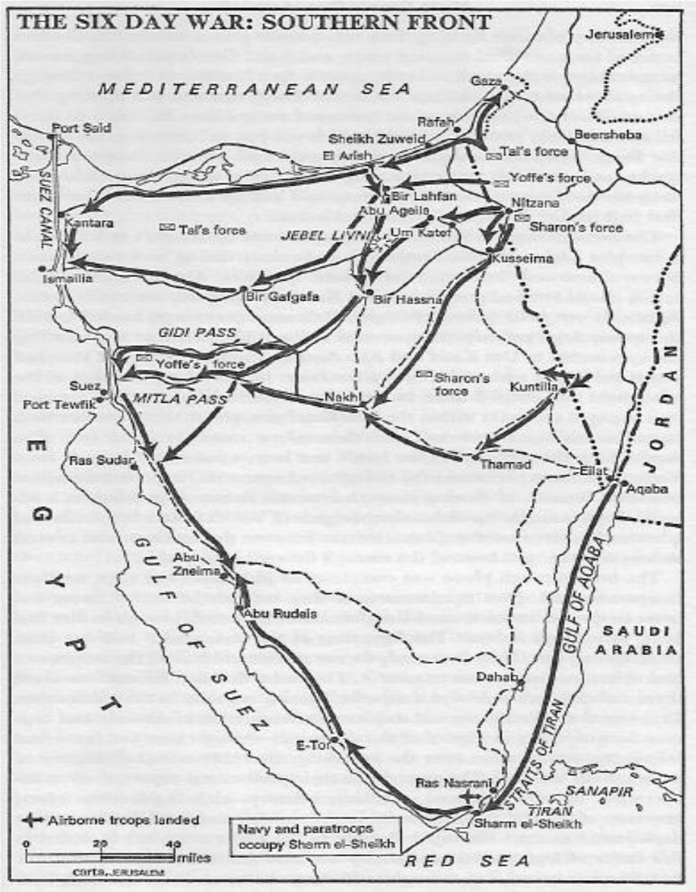
THE SIX DAY WAR: SOUTHERN FRONT
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Jerusalem
Gaza
Rafah
Beersheba
Sheikh Zuweid
El Arish
Tal's force
Yoffe's force
Port Said
SUEZ CANAL
Bir Lahfan
Abu Ageila
Nitzana
Sharon's force
Kantara
Tal's force
JEBEL LIVNI
Um Katef
Kusseima
Ismailia
Bir Gafgafa
Bir Hassna
GIDI PASS
Yoffe's force
Sharon's force
Suez
Port Tewfik
MITLA PASS
Nakhl
Kuntilla
JORDAN
Ras Sudar
Thamad
Eilat
Aqaba
EGYPT
GULF OF SUEZ
Abu Zneima
Abu Rudeis
GULF OF AQABA
SAUDI ARABIA
Dahab
E-Tor
STRAITS OF TIRAN
Ras Nasrani
SANAPIR
TIRAN
Sharm el-Sheikh
Airborne troops landed
Navy and paratroops occupy Sharm el-Sheikh
RED SEA
0
20
40
miles
carta, JERUSALEM

Figure 1[148]

The difficulty in assessing what could have been a sound Israeli strategy lies in this: with no clear political aims there is no strong political base from which to derive a strategic formula. However, there was an *assumed* policy, which was to open the Tiran Strait in the beginning and then restore Israel's deterrence ability in relation to its neighbours. But as has been shown, the meticulous *bridging* of operational planning with the expected strategic effects and political aims was defective, if not totally absent.

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[148] Dayan, *Story of My Life*, p.289.

If the ultimate aim was to retain the right of passage through the Gulf of Aqaba and to restore some political balance in the region, then US sponsored military diplomacy would have been in all likelihood sufficient to achieve this.

If the aim was to secure the Israeli deterrence capacity and to ensure a decisive solution to the conflict over the Straits of Tiran (since the military and most politicians were cynical about the possibility of an international process achieving this) then a **limited military strategy** was the option most likely to achieve it. There is a mixture of scenarios in this limited strategy ranging from low to high intensity depending on the degree of material and psychological punishment intended and the scale of assets to be secured for future bargaining.

At the lower end of the scale, there was an option to occupy the Gaza Strip, thus securing a better defensive position for the future. This would have secured a bargaining card with which to push for the opening of the Tiran Straits, which would have delivered a delicate but effective blow to Nasser's prestige as protector of the Arab Nation which could not have been blamed on foreign machinations as in 1956.

This option was presented at some point to Eshkol who refused it as he was not willing to undertake the difficulties inherent in controlling the Gaza Strip. However, the more probable outcome of this plan would have been Nasser's determination to regain Gaza to restore some of his wounded prestige.

Fear of Nasser undertaking air retaliation on Israel was always present and the IDF was well prepared for this eventuality with the Cabinet having long since endorsed a plan for the destruction of Egyptian air bases in response to any attacks. If Nasser had attacked the Dimona nuclear reactor, which was hard to envisage given the weaknesses of the Egyptian Air Force, the IDF had received permission in May to attack Egyptian air bases in response. Before this permission was given, the Cabinet had planned for far milder responses for fear of international condemnation of its nuclear project.[149]

If greater deterrence capacity and a more assured defensive post-war status were needed, especially given the Egyptian military build-up in Sinai, an option existed for inflicting more humiliation to Nasser's image and his army, and lessening its retaliatory capacity. This option involved a deep and comprehensive air strike against Egyptian air force bases, an operation the IAF was well prepared for.

At the upper level of limited strategy options would be a wide, but specified, ground operation, preceded by an aerial strike, to defeat Egyptian military forces in Sinai with an escape route, but with Israeli ground forces proceeding no further than the Mitla and other strategic passes. Success in this plan would have destroyed much of Nasser's prestige which he could not repair and might have led to his resigning as leader (as indeed he did on 9 June).

However, the destruction of armed forces, which occurred in the war, with the grave human and geopolitical costs it involved would have forced Nasser or his successors to see a further retaliatory war as indispensable for national pride. In the event, the Egyptian people would not let Nasser resign after such a national trauma, as shown on 9 June when popular demonstrations begged him to stay and restore the honour of the nation. This popular attitude could have been predicted given Nasser's enormous popularity among the Egyptian masses.

In addition, any Israeli attack which succeeded in reaching the Suez Canal would, as Dayan had already pointed out, result in the closing of the canal to international shipping and, consequently, huge pressure on Israel to withdraw. In fact, this pressure was never applied, partly because of Israel's pre-war image as victim and post-war image as deserving victor, and partly because of the USSR's unpredictable hesitation, but at that time Dayan's concerns would have been eminently reasonable.

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[149] Gluska, *The Israeli Military,* pp.128-130.

Nevertheless, there were still strategic, operational and tactical dilemmas in reaching the Suez Canal as will be shown later. Within Israel, for example, the acquisition of the Sinai led to domestic political frictions as the Right adopted an expansionist, even an annexationist policy which secured wide public support and permanently increased its political weight.

To clarify Israel's grand/military strategic predicament in the 1967 War, one needs to look at how the military shifted from a wholly defensive plan -- *Sadan*, to different offensive plans -- *Kardom*, *Atzmon*, and finally *Nakhshonim*. These were not merely contingency plans which any army should prepare for use by the political leadership in possible political and strategic scenarios, as Gluska claimed, [150] but represented military strategic options in the hands of the military to be pressed on the politicians without a clear policy/strategic overview. Also, decisions on reaching the Suez Canal, opening the Jordanian front and occupying Golan were never thought about beforehand or taken via a formal political-military channel and all represented a high price for Israel to pay strategically and politically.[151]

Guiding the Fighting Capabilities

If any factor in the 1967 War was decisive, it was the supreme fighting capability of the IDF, especially compared to the Egyptian and other Arab capabilities.

Guiding fighting ability from the strategic perspective is composed of **two tasks**: *providing strategic assumptions* about the mission on which operational capability should be modelled, and *overall guidance for the proportional military capability* vis-à-vis the enemy. The strategic leadership may delegate much of the detail of the second role, albeit being politically responsible anyway, but its role in the first task is utterly indispensable.

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[150] Gluska, *The Israeli Military*, pp.142-151.

[151] Avi Shlaim, "Israel: Poor Little Samson" in Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim, *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp.41-43.

The only **strategic guidance** regarding the mission was manifested in the security concept, which the military was primarily responsible for developing during the 1950s and 1960s, as Allon has shown. The concept required building armed forces with a *qualitative edge* over the Arabs for deterrence and attaining decisive victory in battle if needed.

Strategic leadership provided the IDF with two other elements essential for its maturation; domestic facilitators and external aid. Shimon Perez was the father of structuring the domestic and external facilitators in his long-term post as the main official in the Ministry of Defence from 1953 to 1963. Domestically, the IDF was given a generous budget which rose from $141 million in 1957 to $458 million in 1966.[152] It benefited as well from the economy and from human resources as the population increased due to immigration, and from industrial and educational developments in Israel during the period.

External facilitators meant major arms providers and platforms for training. During the 1950s and 1960s, France was the main arms provider as links were tightened before the 1956 war, and was also the godfather of Israel's nuclear project. However, later on de Gaulle did not share the same enthusiasm for enhancing relations.[153] , From the early 1960s the US became involved in arms supplies to Israel, albeit indirectly through West Germany. With the multiplying of German reparations from 1962 and offers of huge arms deals to Israel, Arabs who kept strong ties with Bonn threatened to cut diplomatic relations or, as Nasser did, to legitimize Berlin (the capital of East Germany), so the US started to deal directly with Israeli arms dealers. Training opportunities existed in France, Britain, West Germany and the US as well.
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[152] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 157.

[153] Detailed accounts of the French military connections were mentioned in Shimon Perez, *Battling for Peace: Memoirs* (Phoenix, Arizona: Orion Press, 1995) pp. 134-165.

[154] Heikal, *The Explosion;* Gluska, *The Israeli Military,* pp.36-37.

For the IDF itself, the security concept was manifested in all fighting capability dimensions; doctrinal, human, organisational and material.

Doctrinal

Due to geopolitical, human and strategic necessities, Israeli military doctrine highlighted the necessity to achieve rapid battlefield decisiveness with low human cost while shifting the war towards enemy territory. This rapid and decisive victory would require early warnings from efficient intelligence, outstanding mobilization techniques and scale, attaining air supremacy for the air force to be used freely to assist tactical victory and slow the invading forces if needed, and "armoured fists" for mobile offensives.

After the 1956 War, the IDF concluded that its battlefield decisiveness could be achieved by relying on air power, armour -- mainly tanks – and to a lesser extent Special Forces. Under this general doctrinal concept, the services doctrines emerged.

An Air Power doctrine grew under Ezer Weizman, who had previously been an RAF pilot, and reflected the need to attain air supremacy before using the air force for tactical support. This was in contrast to the era of strategic bombing, whether in the American version of hitting the vital centres of a war-fighting economy as proposed by Billy Mitchell, or the British idea of Trenchard's of "moral bombing" by attacking the soft belly of the state -- its population -- which had its origin in Douhet's theory.[155] After Weizman had attended the British Staff College, he returned with the conviction that what the IAF was already doing was correct.[156]

In Arab theatres with less developed infrastructure, a highly motivated population and dictatorial regimes careless of human losses, strategic bombing would be less effective, and its price would be less acceptable to the nascent Israel. The centre of gravity, as the IDF saw it, was battlefield decisiveness and a time window for mobilization.

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[155] For more details: Philip Meilinger, *Air Power Theory and Practice* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) pp. 36-64.

[156] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.162.

Weizman planned meticulously for years for attacking Arab, especially Egyptian, air bases deep in enemy territory. He believed in the importance of complementary actions – and concluded that proper air reconnaissance, not only intelligence, and low-flying fighters accompanied by highly able interceptors would be needed.[157] When Hawk air-defence platforms were purchased in 1962 from the US, he deliberately underestimated the air defence elements, fearing they would make the politicians reluctant to sanction pre-emptive air strikes on bases deep in enemy territory. He also lobbied, as did as his successor Mottie Hod, for integration of all air defence elements -- anti-aircraft rockets, guns and intercepting fighters -- under the air service. This only materialized in 1970.[158]

With the lessons of the 1956 War in mind, and re-orienting the strategic and operational contexts, the IDF came to believe in the supremacy of tanks to provide the fire and protection needed in mobile battles in the desert.[159] After Suez, the armoured corps received the finest of IDF personnel; one of them was Israel Tal who became the organizer/philosopher of Israeli armoured forces in the 1960s.

Tal believed, again in contradiction with the worldwide consensus, in two pillars of armoured doctrine: armoured fists and heavily armoured tanks with strong firepower.[160] After WWII, the main armoured logic was in favour of combined armoured/infantry formation, and rapid tanks with modest armour and firepower to increase battlefield mobility. Tal, in contrast, claimed that in an open desert theatre, the entrenched enemy infantry with anti-armour weapons posed little threat because of the poor means of concealment and the proportionately shorter range of anti-tank weapons in comparison to tank fire which reaches more than 2000 meters.[161]

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[157] Ezer Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings* (New York: Macmillan, 1976) pp. 180- 190.

[158] Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings*, pp. 180- 190.

[159] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp.186-188.

[160] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* , pp. 186-188; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.160-161.

[161] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.160-161.

Tal also believed that what preserves ground mobility is the tank's sustainability in the face of enemy fire rather than its speed alone. Hence, two dramatic changes were accelerated. Firstly, the rapidly growing armoured formations became mostly tank formations and mechanized infantry became rudimentary. Secondly, the IDF depended on heavy tanks such as Pattons, M-48s, Centurions, and equipped many older versions with 150mm barrels (Super Sherman) for increased firepower.[162]

Although Tal's second assumption was totally true, his first assumption generally worked in the 1967 War, or this was at least the well-accepted convention. In reality, as Creveld indicated, a meticulous operational and tactical analysis of the war uncovers the weakness in Tal's concept. In the northern sector of Sinai, where the finest of armoured forces were concentrated, tank formations penetrated the weak and hasty defences in the Giradi Defile but were left unsupported until other forces joined after breaking down the whole defence line, an operation in which tactical air support proved to be the major factor.[163]

In the middle and most formidable defences at Umm-Qatef/Abu-Ageila, Sharon's *ugda* did not wait for the morning to enable tactical air support to work; instead, he used sophisticated and combined arms tactical techniques whereby Special Forces, mechanised infantry and tanks participated to overcome the Egyptian defences within 12 hours.

Yoffe's *ugda* performed well, penetrating an undefended theatre and then mounting a surprise attack on tank columns from the Egyptian armoured 4th division at night; afterwards, its main role was to reach the centre of the Sinai defiles in order to obstruct the retreating forces, which were in a miserable condition, with the assistance of the now freed air support.

Nevertheless, Tal's most effective role was reshaping tank formations into highly disciplined forces with a strong ethos, away from the lapsed mode of the IDF inherited from Hagana's days, and to improve the quality of training, maintenance and control to the maximum. Tank crews were to be trained in all functions for better flexibility and readiness, and strict checks with log books were essential, including every item from the parade and uniform to maintenance and electronic utilities.[164]

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[162] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army,* p.189.

[163] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.185; Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army,* pp.243-246.

The Israeli doctrine for ground forces was developed in the light of nullifying the Soviet doctrine which was studied carefully. Within the concept of three layers of well entrenched infantry defences, with the artillery fire zone in front and the tactical armoured reserves behind, the role of Special Forces was enhanced to disrupt the infantry and artillery constellation, mostly after the armoured spearhead.[165]Hence, the IDF expanded its Special Forces element. Starting with one brigade in 1956, by 1967 the IDF had 5 brigades and had transformed the Golani brigade into a diluted Special Forces (Ranger-like) brigade, at the expense of infantry, both dismounted and mechanised.

The expected downside of these doctrinal and structural biases was the neglect of other components in ground forces, notably the artillery and infantry. Sharon's *ugda* had the biggest composition of artillery in the IDF, and the payoff was high. At a higher strategic level, looking at air power and armoured fists as a panacea, without acknowledging either the strategic and operational conditions needed for them to work or their potential vulnerabilities, were a more difficult problem which took another six years to be realised.

Human

In terms of the human dimension, the IDF always believed in its qualitative supremacy in its command, soldiers, morale and training. No doubt this supremacy over Arab opponents was at its clearest in the 1967 War, to the extent that it was seen as immutable rather than contextual and open to change.

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[164] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* p.161.

[165] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army,* pp.234-236.

Many strategists attributed a major part of the military victory in the 1967 War to the higher social parameters in Israel. These parameters, including literacy, innovation, national identity, and sophisticated social infrastructures, fed the IDF with far better recruits more compatible with modern warfare and its human and organisational needs, and this contrast was strongly apparent when comparing Israel to Arab societies during the 1960s. Social weaknesses within Israel, such as the rift between immigrants of different national backgrounds, the divisions between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, and ideological contradictions between maximalist Zionists and those concerned to make concessions to their neighbours were still in their infancy at this stage.[166]

However, adding to these generically superior social conditions in Israel, special modalities were followed in the IDF to enhance the human dimension.

The general theme in the IDF was to give priority to innovation, practical experience, and group morale rather than formal education and a bureaucratic mentality.[167] This theme had huge payoffs but also showed inherent shortcomings.

No formal military academy existed as in other countries, but officer selection was based on a practical and complex approach. Conscripts who showed high qualities in passing both the company leaders' courses would undertake further officer courses. Hence, the new officers were generated from the bottom of the army, undertaking duties and acquiring skills on their way up, with more emphasis on strong relations between officers and soldiers and a strong ethos of informality and similar living conditions. These officers would rotate through different professions during their service and this would loosen the bureaucratic sense and increase flexibility.[168]

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[166] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army,* p.202.

[167] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, US, and Israel* (Stanford: Stanford Security Studies) p.120.

[168] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.116.

IDF policy regarding promotion had a low threshold for redundancy and the retirement age was low. Officers were encouraged to study at civilian universities alongside their military service to establish another career to prepare for the early age of retirement. Around two-thirds of command officers were reservists, and the civilian input and multi-disciplinary mentality was very high.[169]All these measures proved themselves in creating an innovative and practical officer cadre rather than desk adherents, a more civilianized environment with better cohesion and communal trust, and a more flexible organization which were all needed for mobile warfare with changing conditions.

However, the consequent decentralisation, lack of a strong theoretical base and ethos, and informality would prove hazardous in the future although these problems did not manifest themselves during the 1967 War due to the weakness of the enemy.

The IDF adopted the *Mission (optional) command* system in which operational and tactical commanders were given mission objectives and left to their own resources to formulate and execute detailed plans and moves. Temporary command structures were set up to combine any amount of forces needed for a specific mission[170]. However, as Sloan indicated, to work in practice, the mission command system requires a well-disseminated doctrine.[171] As this was not the case in the IDF, a degree of control was somehow applied. The military authority retained the capacity to follow up the tactical and operational events and decisions and intervene if needed. The military command did not rely only on their subordinates' decisions but had the facility to listen to their wireless communications. [172]

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[169] Luttwak and Horowitz, pp.181-104

[170] Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the US, British and Israeli Armies* (Redwood City: Stanford Security Studies, Stanford University Press, 2011).

[171] Geoffrey Sloan, "Military Doctrine, Command Philosophy, and the Generation of Fighting Power: Genesis and Theory", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol **88**, Issue 2, March 2012.

[172] Sloan, "Military Doctrine, Command Philosophy"; Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987) pp.194-200.

This system of command was tried and improved many times before the war. One of the modifications ordered by Rabin after 1963 was to permit the tactical and operational commanders to always accompany their formations in command cars.[173] This system was flexible and innovative and also increased the cohesion of small units and imposed a form of leading by virtue. However, the chaotic practice in the northern sector of Tal's *ugda* when one brigade lost its way in the desert and the other was delayed on its Gaza mission resulted from a lack of proper planning.

The IDF was motivated by different aspects of national and religious ideas and aimed to even out the different ethnic and social backgrounds. It succeeded in this mission to a large extent until 1973 at least.

The sense of militarism and the idea of the "new" Jew *(Sabra)* that occupied the popular perception in the 1950s and 1960s, and the sense of impending extermination before the war brought the will to fight to a peak.[174] The excellent mobilization was not manifested only in getting men into the army, but also in motivating them to fight. The strong officer-soldier relations, the civilianized corps, and command by example all helped to entrench this motivation.[175]

Organisational

The IDF kept its organisation flexible enough to accommodate the reservist-centred approach on one side and the dynamic security environment, even during peacetime, on the other. The IDF was divided into three services under the command of a Chief of General Staff, who also ruled over ground forces HQ. There were special departments under his command; quartermaster (organisation, acquisition and budgeting), manpower, operations and intelligence.

Ground forces were divided into three fronts; northern, central and southern. *ugda*, as a divisional formation, was used temporarily as a body for command in the 1956

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[173] Creveld, *Command in War,* pp.194-200.

[174] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.124-125; Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, p.120.

[175] Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation*, p.120.

War but lacked a well formed administrative structure. Rabin managed to impose the maturation of the *ugda* system. But still, the smaller structures, brigades, battalions or even companies could be transferred easily to different formations or independent missions.

What differentiated the *ugda* from conventional divisions was that it was merely a functioning command for a task force with no organic elements attached to it; hence, it was very flexible for different formations and missions and devoid of the burden of controlling support elements.[176] For example, some brigades under the southern command were used against the central front. Two brigades from Peled's *ugda* in the north were used centrally also, and then moved up to attack Golan on 9 June.

The IDF focused heavily on maintenance and logistics in training, control and war games. The familiarity of its recruits with technical matters helped in introducing strong discipline in checks and repair of equipment. Graduates in the technical and engineering sciences formed the basic skeleton for this service as no technical military school existed. As Horwitz and Luttwak showed, the IDF followed a "pushing" approach in applying logistics. In contrast to the classical "pulling" system in which advance units ask for supplies, in the pushing approach, supply materials were sent straight through the lines of operations until they were met in order not to slow the pace of operations.[177]

The real achievement in this area in the 1967 War was in air bases, where the highly professional and motivated maintenance teams were repeatedly able to get a plane returning from a sortie fixed and prepared to fly again in around 10 minutes.[178]

Material

The Israeli acquisition policy was highly efficient in two ways: firstly it reached the requirements of both the security concept in preserving a qualitative edge over the combined Arab armies. It applied this doctrine by focusing on equipping the air power with tools for air supremacy and tactical support, and the armoured divisions with highly efficient medium-heavy tanks with greater firepower.

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[176] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army,* p.176.

[177] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army*, p.175.

[178] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.162.

Secondly, in the face of budgetary and producers' restraints, the IDF had to select carefully and critically among available weaponry systems to achieve its strategic and operational requirements and to respond to tactical difficulties at the same time.

As indicated in the doctrinal section, the IAF sought the most modern fighters available and chose to purchase French Mirage jets versions I-III and 40 US Skyhawks, although the latter did not arrive before the war. It also had older aircraft types such as light bombers Vougans, Ouragans, super Mysteres and Mysteres. The IAF had around 250 fighters: 75 were Mirages. Weizman generally succeeded in the argument over whether to purchase a large and cheap air force or a much smaller but state of the art force. He supported the second option.[179]

In contrast to the worldwide preference for air-to-air missiles for aerial combat, the IAF asked the producer to replace rockets with cannon which were more suitable for multiple functions, tactical support and air base attacks, and gave more weight for better ordnance. Hence, the IAF showed little interest in bombers, although it still possessed older types, considering them unsuitable for the envisaged short-range operations with the need for multiple-role aircraft. [180]

Lastly, the IAF fitted the light training Fougas produced in Israel with cannons and these proved highly effective during ground operations after the anti-air defence umbrella was broken.[181]

In terms of armour, the IDF had M-48, Centurions and older types of Sherman tanks. Tanks absorbed the ground forces budget and the IDF could deploy on the Sinai front alone between 750 and 800 tanks, most of them in the first line. Even Sherman tanks were modified to carry larger barrels. Mechanized carriers and artillery in contrast were neglected both in type and quantity.

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[179] Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings,* pp.178-181.

[180] Luttwak and Horwitz, *The Israeli Army*, p.199.

[181] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.162.

In comparison to the Arab forces, the high quality weapons in these two services were at least comparable to the combined Arab weapons altogether. If the human, doctrinal and organisational dimensions were added to these dimensions, the gap would be much wider.

As a reflection of the doctrinal shortcomings, artillery, mechanised armour, and naval weapons were much neglected. This reflects the entrenched offensive tank-air dogma since these tools are limited to defensive or combined-arms battles. However, facing a weak enemy who was confused in all aspects of warfare, including procurement policy itself, and failed to expose and exploit the IDF's weaknesses, the above shortcomings went unnoticed until too late.

To conclude this appraisal of the Israeli fighting capability in the 1967 war, two main faults are evident: the absence of strategic guidance which would necessitate some re-modelling of the IDF to pursue different missions, and ossification of the evolved operational art to be an end in itself and not a means.

The second problem became evident to some extent in the War of Attrition and led to dramatic consequences in the 1973 War. The clear-cut military victory in 1967, in spite of some major operational and tactical problems which neither affected the final outcome due to the opponent's frailty nor were looked at carefully due to a euphoric and even arrogant post-war environment, led to uncoupling the operational art from its strategic utility, which did not show up clearly in the War of Attrition. This utility will need to evolve and invite modelling of the art itself, not act as a fixed formula for success.

If this gap between operational art and strategy affected the Israeli performance in the War of Attrition, and much more so in the 1973 War as is discussed later, did it result in any **shortcomings during 1967 war?** Adding to participating in creating the offensive tank-air dogma, which to some extent blinded the sensitivity of the IDF to strategic orientation, there was a higher but still tolerated casualty rate in attacking the northern sector in Sinai and Gaza where artillery and combined arms were ignored, in comparison for example to Sharon's decisive tactical victory over the most formidable defences without air support.

This assessment of the Israeli practical tier would therefore give the Israeli practical strategic ability a **lower medium mark**. Israel had a moderate grand strategy but was very incompetent in having a clear policy and sound military strategy. Guiding operational domains was mixed. Israel could *enhance* her operational capabilities linearly in quantitative and qualitative areas. However, shaping the operational *art* was defective. With the absence of clear strategic guidance, and with the military command's high affinity toward a specific formula, it would be very problematic if the strategic contexts changed, as happened in the next wars, or if it was challenged by a foe more capable in defence and working around air-armour supremacy. However, when the IDF faced a totally bankrupted Egyptian operational capability in 1967, the operational art worked and succeeded eminently.

This lower medium grade in the Israeli practical ability **reflects** to a large extent the combined assessment of low conceptual and medium institutional tiers.

The Strategic Ability of Egypt

In May 1967, Egyptian strategic ability was unfit for any war, whether defensive or offensive. This lack of capacity may be attributed at best to the nature of the political regime, which was based on totalitarianism and obsessed with security, and to the personal aberrations of Nasser himself which were, ironically, catalysed to a large extent by his leadership legacy of post 1956. To validate his legacy or fulfil its requirements, Nasser had to take actions contrary to cold strategic calculations he had made earlier.

Conceptual:

Egyptian strategy-making was undertaken mainly by Nasser himself, so the conceptual ability shown during the war lies principally with him. However, two points should be acknowledged. Nasser did seek active consultations, albeit not in an organized or comprehensive way, from some political experts, especially Heikal, Mahmoud Ryadh[182] and Mahmoud Sedqy[183]. Also, as will be shown, Amer's share in power was expanded after 1962 and he was at least number two in shaping Egypt's military strategy.

Nasser was militarily and strategically educated. Although he left the service at the level of lieutenant-colonel, he had a master's degree from the Staff College and was a lecturer there afterwards.[184] He kept himself intellectually updated and had the ability to read massive amounts of reports from all directions. He benefited from intimate and long conversations with his friend and adviser, Heikal, who had an encyclopaedic political knowledge, albeit as a journalist and public intellectual rather than as an academic or practitioner, but lacked military knowledge and experience.

Nasser was a good reader of foreign sources in politics at least, but there is no indication that he read the classics of strategic thinking, although Amin Howeidi, the war minister just after the 1967 war and the head of General Intelligence, mentioned that when he asked Nasser about modifying the structure of the military and strategic leadership by placing the war minister above the general commander and to combine the latter post with that of the chief of staff (a separation that Nasser kept to preserve regime security) Nasser advised him to read the newly published book "Men of the Pentagon"[185] which showed the necessity of strengthening the presidential hold on the military.

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[182] The previous Foreign Affairs Minister during Suez.

[183] The Prime Minister.

[184] Said Aburish, *Nasser: The Last Arab* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, Saint Martin's Press, 2004), p.10-11.

[185] Carl W. Borklund, *Men of the Pentagon: From Forrestal to McNamara* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 1966).

Nasser also had a clear strategic concept with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He acknowledged the limitations and logic of the utility of force and what the balance of power and regional/international contexts could permit or not permit. He believed before 1967 in a rapid all-out war against Israel from all fronts, but that this should be deferred until developmental, strategic and regional conditions become favourable, and that Egypt should maintain a position of non-alignment by building positive relations with the various sources of arms on either side of the Cold War. After the dramatic events of the 1967 war, he changed his position to belief in a political and diplomatic path to a possible limited war and that the USSR would offer the best protection and support in future conflicts.[186]

In his discussions during the 1956 and 1967 wars that were reported later by Heikal, Nasser was well aware of all topics in strategic logic, at least in its grand rather than its military sense, and he was able to build well-organised scenarios, strategic options and post-action effects. Although these formulae may look sometimes in Heikal's writings too sophisticated to match Nasser's way of thinking and articulation, and closer to Heikal's own mode of expression, much of their basic truth can also be found in contemporary documents such as the minutes of formal meetings and public speeches.[187]

Amer, despite his charismatic and photogenic qualities, was considerably lacking in military knowledge and skills, not to mention strategic thought and planning. His self-development effectively stopped after the 1952 revolution when he was promoted from the rank of Colonel to Lieutenant-General, to General in 1956, and then to Field Marshal in 1962 without any formal education or training for these new roles.

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[186] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Arab Strategies and Israel's Response* (New York: Free Press, 1977); Laura James, "Military/Political Means/Ends: Egyptian Decision Making in the War of Attrition" in Nigel Ashton, *The Cold War in the Middle East*, pp.93-96.

[187] To compare for example Nasser's analysis of the 1967 war and the forthcoming strategy that was transmitted by Heikal in June 1967, see, *The Explosion*, pp.864-865 and his TV speech on 23 July 1967.

His personal life was crowded with personal and political responsibilities which meant he lacked time and concentration to improve his abilities. For example, he never attended any higher military courses after he became a Lieutenant-General, and all war-games or military exercises he attended were for short periods and for ceremonial rather than learning purposes.[188] His discussions with Nasser reported by Heikal, or with the military senior command that were recounted by Fawzy, showed a high degree of strategic illiteracy and an explosive mood.[189]

For the wider military establishment in Egypt, strategic education was still in embryonic form. The Nasser Academy was established in 1965 with two sections, a Higher War College and a National Defence College. As the political-military relationship was problematic, many graduates were deprived of the opportunity to enrich military decision making as they were seen as potential threats to established figures within the military hierarchy. As the Nasserite system was obsessed by security, and Amer transformed the military into his own fiefdom where “men of trust” were promoted at the expense of “men of proficiency”[190], there was no hope for the more able generals to get a place within the higher command. Even the few generals who received the best military education in the USSR were looked at with suspicion on their return[191] lest they compete with Amer or his very inefficient War

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[188] Fawzy’s memoir and Gamal Hammad’s interviews on Al-Jazeera Channel (2008).

[189] For example: his eagerness to send forces to Sinai and close Tiran without bothering to discuss any consequences. He suddenly moved from ordering a limited offensive to all-out war aiming to destroy Israel. Also, he ordered a total withdrawal which crippled the Egyptian Army in the midday of 6 June without any planning or considering an organized retreat to the second defence line. Too late, he ordered the 4th armoured division to delay the Israelis on the passes. Mohamed Fawzy, *The Three Years War*, pp.152-171; Mohamed Al-Gamasy, *Memoirs: the 1973 War* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1993) pp.103-109; Amin Howeidy, *The Lost Opportunities: The Decisive Decisions in the Attrition and October Wars*, (Cairo: Publishing Company, 1992) pp.98-100.

[190] These terms were very famous at this period and in all historical recordings afterwards.

[191] General Gamal Hamdan, after receiving a fellowship to the High War College in the USSR, was removed from the army to become the governor of Kafr-Al Sheikh, a governorate in the Nile Delta! General Gamal Hamad’s memoir series at Al-Jazeera channel (2008).

Minister, Shams Badran, who had been promoted (by fiat and not by merit), from Lieutenant-Colonel.

In short, there was a strong conceptual base in the Egyptian decision-making system centralized around Nasser, but this operated mainly in the grand strategic sense. Military strategic logic was left mostly to Amer who was totally incompetent in this area. This gives the **conceptual tier a medium grade mark.**

Institutional:

The most dysfunctional layer in Egypt's strategic ability was the institutional layer, a factor which led the whole military strategic system to bankruptcy.

Relational

Since 1956, Nasser and Amer had shared joint responsibility over the military, as the former was supreme commander and the latter was both general commander and the war minister.

There was a turning point in 1962, when Nasser wanted to relieve Amer from his position after charging him with responsibility for the failure of the union with Syria. This proposal was refused aggressively by Amer who threatened Nasser with a coup based on his own popular support within the military. Nasser yielded and made an alternative proposal for controlling the military by creating a presidential council headed by Nasser with Amer as one of the members. Amer refused this move also and insisted on being the uncontested general commander.

Astonishingly, after threatening a coup, Amer was given an even higher position as deputy supreme commander and general commander of the Army. After 1967 and Amer's dismissal Nasser went back to the old structure of unified posts.[192]

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[192] Fawzy, *Three Years War,* pp.197-199; Howeidi, *The Lost Opportunities,* pp.86-90.

This structure of unifying the posts of war minister and general commander was prone to strategic malfunction as it did not provide the buffer zone between the political and operational levels of war required for a balanced strategic debate.

Hence, in Egypt, the strategic bridge between the political vision and operational capabilities was held by whoever exercised power at any one time. If the President, as Sadat in 1973, was pre-eminent, the political aims and strategic estimates were not tested meticulously against operational capabilities as the War Minister in such a scenario would impose his leader's political vision over the military rather than channelling the military estimate back to the political leadership. If the military commander was dominant, like Amer in 1967 when the war minister was under his authority, he would push the President to support his military estimates and aims, and would even conceal the real operational capabilities or provide modelled estimates to support the military point of view.

Below Amer, two positions were created: a chief of staff and a war minister. Both positions were intended to be ratified by Nasser. However, they were kept powerless to the extent that Amer issued a decree in 1966 to specify the authorities of war minister. He divided the workload between himself and the minister, Shams Badr so that he would continue to oversee training and operations and Badran would be responsible for wider issues of military intelligence, media and moral guidance, running the officer corps and human affairs, material acquisition and budgeting, and the military judiciary.[193] Such a separation of powers would always be problematic. For example, there was no formal department for surveillance or reconnaissance in direct contact with operations, but only what was affiliated to military intelligence.[194]

This new structure, adding to the existing chaos in operational leadership and management of defence, as will be discussed below, increased the problems of strategy making, amplifying the role of Amer and reducing that of Nasser.

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[193] Amer's decree as was incorporated in Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp. 36-39.

[194] Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp. 36-39.

After a while Nasser asked not to be excluded from the military, hence he was given the right to choose the Chief of Staff, who was General Mohamed Fawzy on the eve of the 1967 War. He also gained the right to chose the occupant of the new post of chief of ground forces, although this was left powerless by Amer, and to agree on the appointment of a war minister, which was Badran, who was Amer's former secretary whom Nasser also trusted. *Functional*

As a result, all functions of the strategy institutional layer were either missing or ineffective.

Information sharing was affected in quantity and quality. The political sector, apart from Nasser himself, was kept isolated from all military information. Transmitted information was distorted, victim to either the wishes of personnel to please their superiors,[195] or to the military's desire to mould the politicians' perceptions so that they would accept the military's preferred policy.[196]

For example, when Badran visited the USSR in the critical period of May 1967 he returned with a much-distorted report which stressed the great support offered by the Soviets and their promise of protection, while the reality was a very reluctant Soviet leadership that warned against escalation and postponed a decision on a projected arms deal. Ironically, when Badran was asked during his post-war trial about the evidence on which he had built this significant conclusion, he said the Soviet War Minister had assured him at the airport before his return journey that the USSR would not desert Egypt by any means, a remark that as Egypt's efficient ambassador to the USSR pointed out was merely a diplomatic courtesy.[197]

Since Amer was in a genuine confrontation with Nasser and held sole domination over the military, much of the information provided by the military, which was itself inaccurate and biased because of weak professionalism, was either prevented from reaching Nasser or was presented in a biased way to support specific policy or what Nasser expected to hear.

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[195] Pollack, *Arabs at War,* p.7.

[196] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy,* pp.80-82.

[197] Howedi, *The Lost Opportunities,* pp.71-74*;* Morad Ghaleb, *With Nasser And Sadat: Years of Victory and Days of Ordeals*, (Cairo: Al-Ahram, 2000, Arabic).

One example was the annual report of 1966 which assessed the actual conduct of the training plan of the Army in the past year. Although the report showed a dramatic lack of genuine training, this data was hidden within a prologue and the body and conclusion of the report emphasised the outstanding readiness of the Egyptian Army.[198]

The function of **critical estimation and reviewing** of scenarios and counter-scenarios was poor if not altogether absent. Nasser permitted the discussion of strategic estimates and options in few meetings -- to be precise two meetings -- with the cabinet, and with the executive committee of the Arab Socialist Union (SAU), the sole permitted political organisation.[199] However, some factors obstructed comprehensive or critical discourse in these meetings.

Firstly, there was no stable institutional platform to deal with strategic problems from the beginning and follow them through the course of a conflict. Secondly, both the lack of proper preparations for such meetings and the overwhelming weight of Nasser's influence meant that Nasser's proposals remained unopposed. The events of May 1967 and the unfolding of the crisis was the outcome of Nasser's style of governance. When he did accept advice from these meetings' attendees it tended to be on issues of detail rather than the big ideas.[200]

Authorization. In spite of Amer's dominance in the military sphere, all political and strategic decisions were kept formally in the hands of Nasser, and the problem of authorization showed in his lack of control and knowledge of the detailed military status and conduct required to make such decisions.

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[198] Fawzy, *Three Years War,* pp.61-62; Howeidi, *The Lost Opportunities*, pp.76-77.

[199] Howedi, *The Lost Opportunities*, pp.67-69.

[200] As was the case when he accepted the UN General Secretary's proposal for a moratorium on a Tiran decision in consultation with Mahmoud Riadh and Mahmoud Fawzy in Howedi, *The Lost Opportunities*, pp.553-556.

An example may be the catastrophic decision to retreat on 6 June. Later, most observers claimed it was a joint decision by Nasser and Amer after Nasser was given a hugely pessimistic report by his deputy. However, the actual conduct of retreat, including possibly its limits and certainly its *modus operandi*, was determined by Amer alone.[201]

Brooks tried in her study to explain the puzzle of the 1967 War – that Nasser escalated the situation to a war he was unprepared for which then resulted in a decisive defeat -- by a theory of a "military dominant regime" in which all functional criteria of political-military assessments were affected. Her analysis ruled out competing theories to explain the defeat, which include the declaration of war as a personal aberration by Nasser as a result of his attempts to exceed his regional rivals in rhetoric, a deliberate plan to go to war, and the outcome of a disastrously misjudged bluff which was only intended for political gain.[202]

Although Brooks' theory no doubt has a strong point in interpreting Nasser's attitude to the war, especially the way that he accepted Amer's over-estimation of the military readiness and fighting power at least for a defensive short war without being able to critique or question it, the other factors were important as well. In addition, Brooks exaggerated the role of military dominance, especially when she attributed the three big decisions of the war -- sending troops to Sinai, forcing the withdrawal of UNEF and closing the Straits of Tiran -- to Amer with Nasser merely dragged along by the military.[203]

In fact, all three decisions were taken by Nasser, although in association with Amer. The decision to send troops to the Sinai was taken in a meeting between the two men on 13 May 1967. Brooks ignored this meeting and decision,[204] but it preceded the military leadership meeting on 14 May. When General Rekhye, after discussion with the UN Secretary-General, asked Amer to choose between maintaining the existing mandate of UNEF or demanding its total withdrawal in response to Amer's original request for the redeployment of UNEF to Gaza and Sharm-El Sheikh only[205], Amer went back to Nasser and both agreed. It was not the sole opinion of Amer or translation errors, as Brooks indicated. This was the case in the beginning but Amer and Nasser agreed later on full withdrawal of UNEF to preserve Egypt's deterrence credibility.[206]

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[201] Gamasy, *Memoirs: The 1973 War,* pp.108-111. He quoted Mahmoud Riadh, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, who supported the opinion that Nasser aimed at retreating to the Defiles line.

[202] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, pp.67-70.

[203] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, pp.67-70.

[204] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, pp.67-70.

Finally, closing the Tiran Straits was expected after the UNEF withdrawal from Sharm El-Sheikh, but the decision was clearly taken by Nasser after consultation with the executive committee of the SAU on 22 May and was announced by Nasser himself on 23 May at Abu-Sweir Air Base.[207]

In conclusion, the abnormal political-military relations with military dominance by Amer subverted the functions of strategic ability in the institutional layer. Information sharing and critical thinking were almost entirely absent. There was defective authority, although it manifested itself in keeping control over conduct rather than on decisions, except in the matter of the withdrawal of 6 June. The military's position was preserved vis-à-vis the President, if not expanded, but they gave way only in one situation due to their eagerness for war. Hence, the **Egyptian institutional tier receives very low marks in this war (moderate clear authorization and formidable position of the military but bankrupted information sharing, critical assessment and strategic intervention of politicians).**

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[205] As Fawzy explained in *Three Years War*, Egyptian military planning early in the conflict depended on the continued UNEF existence in Gaza and Sharm El-Sheikh, so no big forces were kept for their areas.

[206] Haikal, *Explosion, p.475*

[207] Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp.514-519.

The Practical Tier:

Detailed strategy

Given the humiliating defeat in Sinai, any retrospective analysis of the soundness of Egyptian strategy may look redundant. Of the major analysts of the war, only Pollack attributed this defeat to the tactical incompetence of the Arabs caused by cultural aberrations, maintaining this to be the cause in all the examples in his book. [208] As was stated in the theoretical discussion, and will be shown below, this widespread tactical incompetence is a strategic matter, but even tactical incompetence was not sufficient on its own to explain the defeat of 1967.

Clearly, Egypt escalated to war with ill-defined war aims and with political aims mismatched to operational capabilities, with a misunderstood fighting capability which had severe structural deficiencies, and managed the whole conflict and military operations with the worst strategy her fighting power could permit.

Political aims and grand strategy

Nasser's political aims changed as the conflict escalated. When he took the decision on 14 May to mobilize in Sinai and ask for partial withdrawal of UN forces he was merely aiming to deter Israel from attacking Syria and to restore his reputation damaged by the charge of hiding behind UNEF. However, once he became sure that war was coming e aimed also to restore the credibility of deterrence and his reputation by coercing Israel into a military operation, or at least withstanding an offensive until international diplomacy intervened as it had in 1956, so that he could come up again with a political victory. There were grave miscalculations in Nasser's formula.

Firstly, although his political aims were defensive and this was very clear to his political and military elites, his public statements and propaganda adopted very offensive aims -- including the destruction of Israel. He may have thought such rhetoric would serve to deter Israel from further action but it led only to the draining away of international support for his position and to strengthen Israeli public opinion in favour of mobilisation, although the Israeli leadership was perfectly aware of the true balance of power.

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[208] Kenneth Pollack, *Arabs at War,* pp.75-84.

Secondly, the reason that his manoeuvres did not succeed in deterring Israel was that deterrence needs threat credibility in order to work. Neither Israel nor the US, as explained earlier, had any doubt that the outcome of any military confrontation between Egypt and Israel would be the destruction of Egypt's forces.

Thirdly, when Nasser, trapped by his own manoeuvres, realised by looking at the Israeli preparations and political will that war was imminent and inevitable (his estimates of the likelihood of war rose from 50% to 75%, to 100% on 2 June[209]) he had two options to deal with the conflict after the huge military concentrations and aggressive political propaganda: to face a massive loss in deterrence position and reputation by de-escalating or to wait and prepare for a defensive battle in imitation of his approach in 1956. With the expectation that the results of a defensive war would be similar to those of 1956, he chose the second option.

Here, Nasser fell into the last-war syndrome which he had previously warned against.[210] Neither the military balance between Egypt and Israel nor the international political situation was similar to 1956. In 1956, there was a scramble for influence in a new Middle East where old empires had been gradually replaced by new ones; the USSR was under the strong leadership of Khrushchev, and the US was at least not overtly hostile to Nasser's regime.

In 1967, the context was almost completely reversed: the US was in a harsh confrontation with Nasser and was eager to unleash Israel or at the least to accept it unleashing itself. In addition, many neutral countries were alarmed by Nasser's aggressive policy and Israel's expressions of a sense of impending destruction, and the USSR was under a chaotic tripartite leadership which chose to follow a very cautious and cooling policy towards the US.

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[209] Heikal, *The Explosion*, pp.813-816.

[210] Heikal, *The Explosion*, pp.715-716

Nasser was hoping also for a repeat of the outcome of the Rotem crisis.[211] However, he ignored what he was told by many sources -- that the IDF was looking for a war with him, and he had undertaken Rotem in a silent and covert way not in the present furious and overt manner. Also, he had now closed the Straits of Tiran, which was a red line agreed by Israel and the US after the 1956 War which Israel frequently referred to as a potential *casus belli*. The closing of the Straits, and the ongoing rhetoric left little space in which Israel could wait without its deterrence position being seriously damaged.

Finally, due to institutional anomalies, Nasser was convinced by overestimates of the fighting capabilities of his Army that it could withstand an Israeli offensive for the time required for the international diplomatic machinery to work and impose a solution. Also, due to his eagerness to maintain and even restore his heroic image, he was cognitively biased towards ignoring more cautious calculations and expressions of alarm, and adopted an escalating position even when he knew for certain that Soviet warnings about the Syrian invasion turned out to be wrong.

Military strategy

There was a total *dichotomy* between policy/grand strategy on the one hand and military strategy on the other as a result of the separated and contested decision-making systems. Amer was motivated to go for war to prove himself[212] and his army, and believed Israel had two choices: either to swallow a political defeat in order to avoid a confrontation with the Egyptian Army or to seek a confrontation in which case an Egyptian offensive would be reasonable.

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[211] This point was discussed by Uri Bar-Joseph, *Rotem: The Forgotten Crisis.*

[212] Early in 1967, Amer had a personal scandal when he revealed to Nasser that he got himself involved in what was considered to be an unsuitable secret marriage with an Egyptian artist. Nasser was committed to relieve Amer but he deferred this step in order to save the morale of the Army, and then the May crisis erupted. Heikal, *The Explosion,* pp.394-398.

During the first half of the crisis, Amer chose the **deterring** option. He was committed to mobilizing huge forces and throwing them into the Sinai regardless of their preparation or training. He actually imagined at some point that he was able to mobilize two million soldiers.[213] Although this was totally impractical given the state capacity and the population's willingness, he believed that mobilizing huge forces would necessarily lead to enhancing the army's fighting capability regardless of the new recruits' fighting qualities or the ability of the army to accommodate such numbers. These forces, on the contrary, would prove to be "hollow forces" that undermined the Army's capability rather than enhancing it.

Would such a large-scale mobilisation have worked as a deterrent to Israel? The answer was almost certainly the opposite. Even if Amer was convinced by the fictional internal estimates of the (active) Army capability, he knew for certain the poor status of the mobilized reserves which accounted for 75% of the Sinai forces, to the extent that he gave orders on 3 May for drills on how to shoot a gun.[214]

During the second half of the crisis, Amer started to plan for an **offensive** but then was ordered by Nasser to stay on the **defensive**. However, he kept changing the deployment of his forces in a manic way to suit his swinging military mood with haphazard paper plans.

On 25 May he even gave orders to launch an aerial offensive which was cancelled by Nasser. At this meeting attended by the supreme military command he had a private conversation with Nasser and then announced to his fellow officers that Egypt should not undertake any offensive operation. [215]

Plans

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[213] Most of these mobilized forces had not been in training or drill before and they went to the front wearing their civilian clothes which were not more than "Galabyyas/long shirts" in many cases.

[214] Fawzy, *Three Years War,* pp.61-63.

[215] Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp 99-102.

The traditional defensive plan for Sinai was Plan *Qaher* (compelling). It involved defensive positions in Sinai following the Soviet doctrine of deep defensive operations with light forward defences, triple entrenched infantry defences with tactical and operational armoured reserves, and strategic mobile armour for active defence or exploitation. Hence, one division was to deploy in the forward sector, mainly Umm Qatef/Abu Ageila, and two infantry and mechanised infantry divisions in the Bir Lahfan/Thamad sector, with the operational reserve in the Defiles. The strategic reserve was ready to move to Sinai and was composed of the 4th Armoured Division at least.[216]

What Amer did in the three weeks from 14 May to 5 June exceeded what Israel could have achieved in terms of demoralizing and confusing the Egyptian Army which was already composed mainly of hollow forces.

Firstly, Amer diverged from the agreed plans in *Qaher* by ordering the entrenchment of the forward line by three divisions, fearing an Israeli encroachment on Gaza and the border area.

He then started to plan offensive operations against Eilat and Northern Negev, and moved the weight of his forces to the north and then to the south and hastily formed an armoured/mechanised infantry task force under Saad Al-Shazly.

Lately, after cancelling his planned offensives, Amer thought the Israeli thrust would be towards the south so he formed a “curtain of tanks” in the southern axis area, further depriving much of the northern forces of armoured capacity. (Fig. 1)

As we saw in the description of Operation *Kardom*, the Israeli thrust was in the south, but once they understood the Egyptian deployment, they shifted their main thrust to the north but kept some forces near the Kontilla southern axis to act as a distraction and intensify the Egyptian misperception.

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[216] Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp.99-101

As Fawzy indicated, Amer developed four offensive ground plans[217] and two aerial plans, one for deep operations against air bases and the Dimona nuclear reactor, and the other for tactical support for a projected Eilat thrust.

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[217] Adding to Qaher; the defensive in depth plan for Sinai, and its air support plan; Fahd, there was an aerial plan to attack Eilat; Assad, and a limited offensive ground plan for the same purpose; Fagr. Also, the mobile forces under Shazly were supposed to stay in the north sector to challenge the Israeli offensive on Gaza and to mount an active defence operation; Sahm, but then were transferred to the south as indicated. Two minor offensive plans in the north sector were also formulated (Suleiman and Ghasaq). Fawzy, *Three Years War,* pp. 99-115.

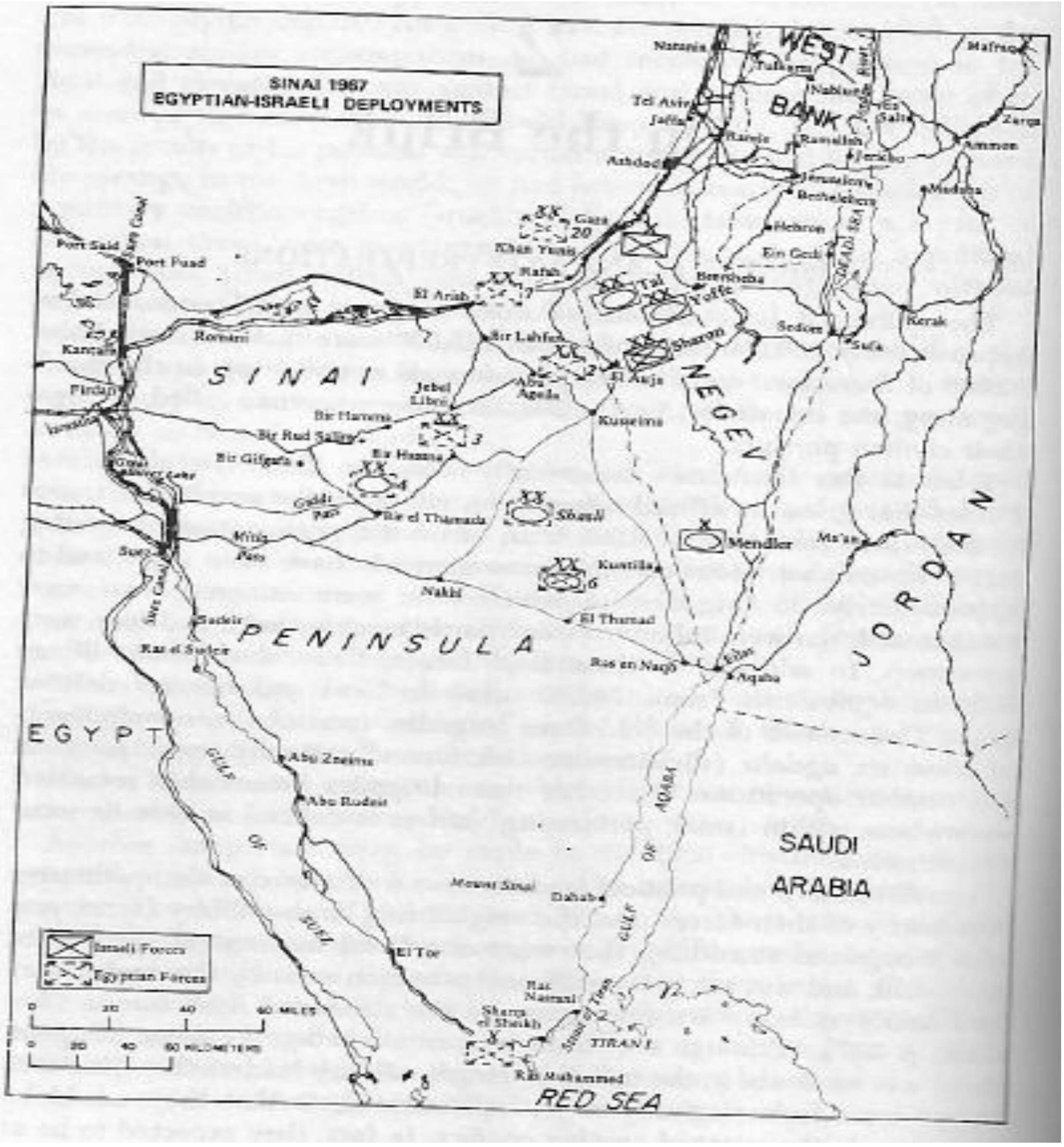
SINAI 1967
EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DEPLOYMENTS
WEST BANK
Natania
Tulkarm
Nablus
Tel Aviv
Jaffa
Ramle
Ramallah
Jericho
Salt
Zarqa
Mafraq
Amman
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Madaba
Hebron
Ein Gedi
DEAD SEA
Gaza
Khan Yunis
Rafah
El Arish
Beersheba
Tal
Yoffe
Sedom
Kerak
Safa
Port Said
Port Fuad
Romani
Kantara
Bir Lahfan
Abu Ageila
El Auja
Sharon
Kuseima
SINAI
NEGEV
Firdan
Ismailia
Jebel Libni
Bir Hamma
Bir Rud Salim
Bir Hassna
Bir Gifgafa
Giddi Pass
Bir el Thamada
Shazli
Mendler
Ma'an
Suez
Mitla Pass
Kuntilla
Nakhl
El Thamad
PENINSULA
Ras el Sudar
Ras en Naqb
Eilat
Aqaba
JORDAN
EGYPT
Abu Zneima
Abu Rudeis
GULF OF SUEZ
GULF OF AQABA
SAUDI ARABIA
Mount Sinai
Dahab
El Tor
Ras Nasrani
Sharm el Sheikh
TIRAN I.
Ras Muhammad
RED SEA
Israeli Forces
Egyptian Forces
0 20 40 60 MILES
0 20 40 60 KILOMETERS

Figure 2[218]

In these plans, firstly Amer had no clear political aim to serve, not that he was authorized to serve one, apart from harassing Israel in response to the "impending" military invasion of Syria.

Secondly, he used to change the deployment of forces continuously based on premature operational planning ideas. These plans were merely generic guidelines to forces and commanders who had been educated to be prepared and trained for each step in order to fight.

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[218] Trevor Dupuy, The *Elusive Victory: The Arab Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) p.232.

Thirdly, adding to the miserable situation of the mobilized forces in Sinai, Amer's orders only helped grind them down morally and physically because: they had never been trained for offensive operations and their defensive formations on the eve of 5 June were tactically loose and forwardly displaced in a form of static defence with limited space for operational manoeuvres.

Most critically, when Nasser ordered the army on 2 June to withstand the first Israeli air strike which was predicted within 48 to 72 hours, Amer accepted this strategy and claimed the army was prepared, and his Air Chief predicted a tolerable air loss of 10-20%.

At this critical moment, the military leadership committed **two mistakes** from the strategic perspective. Firstly, it gave grossly miscalculated preparedness estimates while knowledge of the army's real capability would have made Nasser's defensive strategy unworkable. If Nasser had known the army's real capability he might have chosen an offensive strategy or sought to end the conflict at whatever political price.

Secondly, even with the serious warnings about an impending air strike, the air defences system was bankrupt in all components and nothing was done to rectify its shortcomings. When the Israeli air strike came on 5 June, lack of surveillance, communication, integration of air defence components and the exposure of Egyptian fighters left on the runways without shelters all showed the reckless attitude of the military leadership despite the warnings of imminent attack.

All these factors combined **to severely weaken Egyptian fighting capabilities**, and no comprehensible strategy existed to consolidate and direct military plans and moves.

Military Strategy during the War

On the morning of June, Amer was caught by the Israeli attack while he was in an aeroplane heading to Sinai and he could find no suitable base to land, so he landed at Cairo's civilian airport and had to go back to his Headquarter by taxi. Once there, false reports were further distorted by his wishful thinking. He only started to understand the truth gradually, and began to lose his nerve and become bad-tempered. He overrode the HQ and operational commanders to order tactical moves to the smallest units without formulating any general plan.[219]

It is unclear exactly when he gave the order for a **general non-organized retreat which turned into a rout**, but it must have been at some point during daytime on 6 June when he heard of the fall of Al-Arish.[220] This general order for retreat without heavy weapons or organized routes was given to forces which were totally demoralized. Most of their commanding officers had already fled and they were under fire and facing combined Israeli ground-air forces obstructing the Passes. This transformed the Egyptian Army in the Sinai into a ruined mass which theorists of an "indirect approach" could not have bettered. This ruin as achieved mainly by its own leadership.

Amer was shattered first by the total loss of his air power and thought that he would be unable to fight on the ground without air support, and when he learned of the fall of Al-Arish he panicked and ordered the retreat with no discipline. He was then told, correctly, that he could pull his forces back to the line of passes where the geography would make a defensible line. He tried to do this but too late.

The only good decision in the campaign was the order of General Mourtaga, the commander of the Sinai front, to the 4th Armoured Division, to defer its retreat to the morning of 7 June in order to protect the rear of the retreating forces and slow the pace of the Israelis. The division's third brigade and another relieving brigade from Ismailia fought well and inflicted tangible losses on the Israeli armoured advance, and did so without air support.[221]

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[219] Heikal, *The Explosion,* pp.728-729 & 821-822; Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp.151-154.

[220] There was contradictory evidence. On one hand, Fawzy in *Three Years War* said that 'Amer ordered him with two other fellows in the evening of the 6th to prepare in 20 minutes a plan for a retreat; when Fawzy returned with a plan organizing a retreat over three nights he was informed by Amer about the latter's order. However, Fawzy himself, and Gamasy also, emphasised that forces started to retreat from noon and hence Amer's order should have preceded that.

Would an **alternative military strategy** involving a well-organized retreat to the passes, rather than a general shapeless retreat under fire, have been able to make a difference to the ultimate outcome of the war?

Some accounts may rule out this possibility given the weak morale of the Egyptian forces and their poor quality in fighting methods. However, four factors should be considered in deciding whether a better strategy could have led to a better result.

Firstly, the morale of the Egyptian forces was not inherently weak but was made so by external actions. Many soldiers and officers fought to the death with desperate courage and, as Pollack rightly indicated, the only forces that disintegrated were those ordered to retreat under fire or which found themselves without command as their officers fled.[222]

Secondly, those Egyptian divisions which were the best prepared -- most of the 4th armoured division, the third mechanized division and Shazly's task forces -- did not face the first Israeli thrust and did not fight at all apart from limited clashes in hopeless conditions during the retreat. It is therefore not clear what a well-trained and well-commanded Egyptian force could have achieved given the opportunity.

Thirdly, the geographically impassable Sinai mountain defiles (the Mitla Pass and the other Passes) undermined the key Israeli tactics of armoured enveloping and tactical air support. Post-mortem analysis showed clearly that the damage done by the IAF on Egyptian ground forces was much less than proclaimed and mostly affected the soft elements of infantry and combat support but not tanks (2-3% of the tanks were damaged).[223] The weak command/control ability of IAF in 1967, its low profile air-to-surface equipment and lack of the right plane (low and slow-flying straight-winged)[224] would have made Israeli close air support operations very difficult if the Egyptian armour had quickly resorted to engaging Israeli ground forces. Fourthly, and more importantly, although the final victory in any battle at the Passes would probably have gone to the Israelis, it would have cost them lives and time. Given the international pressure for a ceasefire, the pressure on the USSR to restore some losses to its broken pride, and the Israeli recovery after the great achievement of the first round of fighting when they had anticipated annihilation, plus Nasser's growing realisation of the facts on the ground, a ceasefire could have been achieved with better human and political results for Egypt and, paradoxically, for Israel too, as Nasser would have been in a better position to negotiate, as he did eventually three years later with the US-proposed Roger's Plan.

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[221] Full account on the desperate battles that withdrawing Egyptian forces fought in Bir Hamma, Bir Hassna and Mitla can be found in Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory*, pp.271-273; Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp.148-150.

[222] Pollack, *Arabs at War*, pp. 67-77.

Nevertheless, given Egypt's atypical political-military structure and defective military system, could the actual scenario have been changed, and could historical fate have been reversible in reality? Manipulating strategy dimensions, especially for political system and society/culture, would require vision, political will and more crucially, time. This is what simplistic anti-factual scenarios do not acknowledge.

Guiding fighting power

Guiding the Army infrastructure to suit a **specific strategic mission**, was defective for two reasons: the lack of involvement by the political leadership with weak military command under Amer, and the lack of proper and sufficient information about the enemy. Hence, even the purely operational guidance for fighting capability to match let alone surpass the enemy **(counter-operational capability)** was defective as well.

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[223] "Special Report: Survey of Combat Damage to Tanks, volumes I-III", Report by the Joint Technical Coordination Group for Monition Effectiveness (Washington: Defence Intelligence Agency, 1970), quoted in Kenneth Pollack, "Air Power in the Six Days War", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. **28**, No 3, 417-503, June 2005.

[224] David Rodman, *Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War: Diplomacy, Battles and Lessons* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2017) p.75.

Doctrinal

Although not many resources are available on doctrinal issues in the Egyptian Army, and it did not undertake sufficient actual fighting during the war to enable the extraction of inferences from its mode of fighting, there is evidence of a doctrinal conflict. In contrast to what might be expected in armies run in imitation of the Soviet army, there was not much focus on doctrine in the Egyptian army. The Soviets did not increase their role anyway in the Egyptian military until after 1967. The Soviet scholarships offered to Egyptian senior officers were limited, and many of the officers who did receive them were not put in commanding positions after return, as indicated earlier.

In addition, the impact of the war in the Yemen in diluting the regular fighting methods of the army[225] led the Egyptian army, if indeed it did try to imitate Soviet military doctrine, to do it in a way that showed poor comprehension of the original.

The Soviet emphasis on hard training, sophisticated planning, strong centralization, - although with tactical flexibility, and the importance of deep operations and combined arms, were all ignored in practice. It seems that these results stemmed not only from poor application but also poor understanding, as the lessons from the Soviet experience were ignored utterly by the higher military leadership. For example, when the concept of deep operations was disregarded by Amer from the early stage of the crisis, no comment was ever raised against him, even in a non-confrontational way.

Apparently, many doctrinal points were simply not decided upon: no roles for the major elements -- armour, air, navies and Special Operations -- were identified in defensive or offensive operations vis-à-vis the IDF, in part because of ignorance of the IDF's modus operandi, but also because there was a lack of doctrinal sources and enablers in terms of command, education and system to generate and utilize lessons.

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[225] This point was made by Fawzy in *Three Years War* and Gamasy in *Memoirs: the 1973 War*, pp.61-65.

For example, when Egypt lost its air ability on the 5 June, no detailed discussion was held on how to respond to this: were the ground forces able to perform any holding operations by profiting from terrain and quick engagement with enemy, or even to retreat to the passes with a new set line of defences in spite of Israeli air supremacy?

Amer had a provisional answer, most probably from the air commander, so he gave the order for a general retreat. He changed his mind after a discussion with Fawzy, but most of the ground commanders were sceptical about the possibility of continuing to fight. The retreat itself, in the way that it was ordered by Amer and carried out in the field, was an indication that Amer lacked even a basic understanding of the process and its essential prerequisites.

Human

The human dimension was the worst of all in Egypt's fighting capability. The general trend in Amer's military policy was to promote those who showed a high degree of loyalty to him regardless of their professional ability. He created a form of patronage in the military. He was very generous with money, promotions and civilian prerogatives to the military in general, and to "his" men in particular, so the great loyalty he enjoyed in the military was personal to him and not based on nationalist sentiment, professionalism or discipline.

This artificial loyalty was harmful because it consumed the attention of the high command, and the officer corps in general, and put unprofessional me in positions with a high level of responsibility for long periods. Amer himself was a good example of this. Nasser kept him in position voluntarily, at least until 1962, in spite of his poor performance in 1956 and in Syria. General Sedqy Mahmoud, the air and air defence commander, was kept on from the war of 1956 to that of 1967 when his air bases were destroyed in an almost identical manner to the earlier war.

The command function was further undermined by the rigid and highly centralised chain of command, due to the political obsession with security, which prevented the tactical and operational leadership from taking initiatives. Even the most obvious and normal procedures[226] caused a long lag in communication between actions on the ground and reactions needed from the command structure. For example, reports had to be sent all the way to HQ, not to the army or front command, and answers were sent back in the same way.

If communications were attacked, as on 5 June, or reports were fabricated[227], as was often the case, orders for battlefield moves would be delayed until they were no longer relevant or bore no relation to reality on the ground.

The officer corps had become a "social class" with an arrogant and aggressive aura, and a distinctive and privileged way of life. This transformed the officer-soldier relationship to a form of subjection, a relationship whose negativity was increased by the fact that most conscripts were illiterates who were forcibly taken from their lands to live in the harshest possible atmosphere.[228] Hence, unit cohesion and trust in leadership vanished entirely in the turmoil of the opening of the war, when most commanding officers quickly fled.

Egyptian soldiers, coming from poor, socially conservative and religious strata, were capable of great stamina and courage in fixed defences. But with the declining morale in the Army and no apparent valid goal to die for, individual and group morale soon collapsed[229] even where there was minimal danger from unexpected directions[230], a situation which would be transformed during the Wars of Attrition and in 1973. Illiteracy[231] also profoundly affected the capacity of Army recruits to handle the new warfare technology, especially tanks, regardless of the intensity of training.

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[226] For example, Sharon's forces after passing the central obstacle were left peacefully during the 6th June, while they were surrounded by Shazly's taskforce from the south and the third division from the north.

[227] As was expected, in such politicized environments, reports to the superiors always tend to please them or to favour their reporters. Egyptian officers also tend to exaggerate the enemy forces and to over-estimate their battle achievements.

[228] Nobar Aroyan, *Diary of a Soldier in the Egyptian Military: a Peek Inside the Egyptian Army* (Bloomington IN: West Bow Press, 2012); and Pollack, *Arabs at War*.

[229] This phenomenon was described by many people who encountered, or observed, Arabs militarily. For example: Ariel Sharon, *Warrior: An Autobiography*; Pollack, *Arabs at War.*

Anthony Pascal and et al. studied how the low societal parameters (modernity, social transformation and economic growth) were responsible for the drop in the Arab military effectiveness in using new weaponry systems. Based on macro-competence (the ability to manage military organizations) and micro-competence (individual skills), the authors indicated that an increase in the army's size and technology intensify existing inadequate macro-competence. [232]

Egyptian mobilization was generally inefficient but for all the 20 million population it could mobilize fewer than 180,000 men. On the eve of the war, around two divisions were in Yemen, and 40,000 were used in central security duties, so 100,000 were in Sinai. Two thirds of the men were either new conscripts or old reservists with no recent training, and they were facing an army of 70,000 very well trained Israelis. The problems with the mobilization lay on the shoulders of the political leadership and general policy in Egypt, but poor mobilization techniques, the lack of regular recalls and training, and the haphazard organisation of reservists[233] were primarily the military leadership's responsibility.

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[230] General Fawzy mentioned a self-explanatory situation when he went to the Front at Ismailia on 7 June; he saw a column of Egypt's finest T-54 tanks abandoned on the other bank. He ordered a hasty formation to go and get the column back, but his order was not executed. He then saw an Israeli company heading to the column, so he asked the company to be harassed by fire. Again, he was disobeyed as such a step would warrant an Israeli aerial attack in response, in Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp. 157-158.

[231] At that time, no university graduates were recruited in the soldiers' corps. Also the ratio of personnel with preparatory (sub-secondary) education reached only 9% in the army, 18 % in the navy, and 21% in air power. Fawzy, *Three Years War*, p.62.

[232] Anthony Pascal and et al., *Men And Arms In The Middle East: The Human Factor In Military Organisations,* prepared for the Director of Net Assessment, The Office of the Secretary of Defence, 1979.

[233] Most of these reservists were put in formations different from their own. Also, the reservists were mixed in regular formations and this meant the Egyptian Army had no complete battle ready brigade.

Due to economic difficulties, even the reservist rota was shortened in 1967 and training was cut generally to save on budget. The problem of training was grave. A pre-war report indicated, for example, that no tank shells were used in training, and only 11% of the fuel that was earmarked for training purposes was actually used.[234] Ironically, this was the report that lauded the high preparedness of the Egyptian Army to achieve its national goals![235] Also, just before the 1967 War, the shortage of manpower reached 40% of the wartime order of battle.[236]

Organisation

The chaotic organisation of the Egyptian Army was also a serious problem with the division of forces between Amer and Badran which disconnected military operations from instant reconnaissance, and the insertion into the command structure of a ground forces commander (General Salah Mohsen) at the behest of Nasser so that he should not feel marginalised in allocation of military honours. Then in May the insertion of the Sinai Front Command previously occupied by an expert officer of General Mortagy was a late attempt to repair the politicized command positions.

These intervening layers of command with no clear responsibilities were totally ignored by Amer who even contacted individual battalions directly once the war erupted. For example, the Sinai and Eastern commanders only heard about the order for retreat when fleeing forces reached the Canal.[237]

The force structure was also unhealthy. In addition to diluting active formations with untrained reservists, the balance of offensive/defensive, mobile/firepower components was totally skewed to the defensive and firepower (infantry and artillery). In armies used to holding political legitimacy, the infantry component expands.[238] Also, the lack of interest in mobile forces, which need skilled socio-technological characters, flexible control and an innovative environment, put more emphasis on static defences occupied mainly by infantry and artillery.

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[234] Fawzy, *Three Years Wa*r, pp.60-68; Howeidy, *The Lost Opportunities*, pp.76-78.

[235] Howeidy, *The Lost Opportunities*, pp.76-78.

[236] Fawzy, *Three Year's War*, p. 66.

[237] Fawzy, *Three Year's War*, p. 66.

Material

Gross weaponry capability was the best of the Egyptian fighting capabilities. Alas, weapons do not make war by themselves. Nevertheless, whereas the IDF chose weapons selectively to serve strategic and doctrinal concepts, and on a tailored assessment of the enemy and the parameters of the operational theatre, such orientation was almost entirely absent in the Egyptian Army before the 1967 war.

In fact, on 14 May there was also a generalized shortage of weapons, a deficit of 30% in small arms, 24% in artillery, 45% in tanks, and 70% in vehicles.[239]

Egyptians sought important advances in tanks and fighters/bombers first, and then in artillery, for the navy and for mechanised infantry. Egypt had around 200 first line fighters: MiG 21, 30 supersonic TU-16 bombers, and another 200 older versions; MiG 17, a few supersonic MiG 19, and in-stock Su-7 for tactical support which were never used.[240] This was comparable technically to Israel, but the pilot to plane ratio was 0.8:1 in comparison to 2-3:1 in Israel.

Tanks were mainly T-34, T-44, and the new version of T-55 which can be compared to the Israeli Centurion but had less armour and firepower. Nasser could field in Sinai 950 tanks, 1000 artillery pieces, and 1100 APCs. The Egyptian Navy was more advanced than the Israeli navy, with Osa and Komar missile boats in addition to the old destroyers and submarines.[241] These ratios were higher than those enjoyed by the Israelis in artillery, the navy and APCs. However, they were much more comparable in air power and tanks,[242] especially if technical quality is incorporated in the analysis, let alone the qualitative human and doctrinal measures.

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[238] The ratio was unbalanced; 1 armoured division to 4 infantry divisions, and 1 armoured brigade to 9 infantry brigades. Fawzy, *Three Year's War,* p.64.

[239] Fawzy, *The Three Years War*, p.67.

[240] Pollack, *Arabs at War,* p. 59.

[241] Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory*, p.237.

The point here is that Egypt could never attain air supremacy in the near future due to the lack of qualified pilots, poor doctrine and inefficient operational management. The navy would not achieve its goals unless some form of air denial was attained. If Egypt could not make structural changes in many dimensions in order to attain air supremacy, then more investment would be necessary for air defence measures which in practice suffered from a devastating lack of integration and planning. Air bases were vulnerable and planes were left without shelters until the last moment.

The Army had no idea until after the war how to focus on air defences elements in order to attain air denial for its ground operations and deep areas. Only after the War did the Egyptian air defence organisation mature. By separating it from air power and forming an independent service with new training, personnel, weapons and, most importantly, doctrine it could then serve in a new strategic role.[243]

Given Nasser's strategic concept that relied on a postponed battle of annihilation, Egypt needed an interim means to achieve both an effective defensive position and deterrence. Much of this effect would have been reached by multi-task grand strategy. But from the military side there needed to be the provision of tools that ensure defence and deterrence. These tools were chosen correctly by Nasser -- missiles and a nuclear project.

Sirrs indicated that poor technical capacity, the economic crisis in the first half of the 1960s, and Israeli coercive actions in attacking the German scientists together with diplomatic pressure on West Germany all contributed to the failure of these projects.[244] However, if a more serious political leadership had secured its control over the military or, at least, could have invited healthy strategic debates, much of the military, diplomatic and budgetary assets, which were not insignificant, could have been diverted to these essential projects.

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[242] The IDF put 750-800 tanks in Sinai, and had 70 advanced Mirage, and another 150 super-Mysteres, Mysteres and light bombers Vautours and Ouragans.

[243] For detailed accounts; Marouf al-Bakhit, *The Evolution of Egyptian Air Defence Strategy 1967-1973,* PhD Thesis, Kings College, London, 1990.

[244] Owen Sirrs, *Nasser and the Missile Age in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2006)

As detailed strategies (clear policy, grand strategy and military strategy) and guiding operational components (enhancing capabilities and shaping the operational art) were very defective, **the practical layer was very low**. This grade **does not reflect** the combined moderate conceptual and low institutional ability as it is less than expected. Two reasons can be identified for this phenomenon:

First, the **personal aberration** of the two strategic commanders (Nasser and Amer) massively reduced the quality of strategy-making in practice. Nasser's obsession with his image as the Arab hero and guardian pushed him to a strategic course of actions that was in total opposition to his perceived theory of victory. Amer, in addition of his massive lack of professional qualities as a military commander, and also because of that, lost his temper totally in the critical moment of the war.

Secondly, Israel's outstanding operational decisiveness quite early in the war, especially in the air, was a **strategic leverage** for further Israeli strategic advantage, and limited the strategic options available to the Egyptians.

If the practical strategic abilities of Egypt and Israel are put together; Israel's was lower medium and Egypt's was the lowest grade. This indicates a low advantageous ability for Israel.

The Outcome of the War

In six days of war, four of them fought on the Egyptian front, Israel achieved a decisive military victory. The IDF reached Suez and completed its mopping up operations to secure its hold on Sinai, and the Egyptian army was annihilated with most of its formations crippled, and it lost between 10,000 and 15,000 men killed and more than 4,000 men captured. Egypt lost 90% of its air power (100% of its long range bombers), 65% of its tanks and suffered large losses in other components.[245] A ceasefire was declared on the Egyptian front on 8 June.

After the war, Egypt underwent a transitional period of political turmoil with the half-hearted resignation of Nasser, the forced resignation of the heads of military services, and bitter recriminations between Nasser and Amer which ended with the announcement of Amer's suicide and installation of a new military command. Despite these chaotic events, Egypt took military and political measures to lessen the effects of defeat.

Militarily, a new policy of restoring its lost fighting power was adopted, but the urgent task was to restore much of the lost equipment as soon as possible, especially in the field of air power, to re-organize the collapsed ground formations and form a hasty defence line west of the Suez Canal. Low scale active defence operations began as early as 1 July in Ras-Al Esh near the only Egyptian pocket east of Suez in Port Fuad. Another small air battle occurred on 14 and 15 July.

However, the most important military encounter was naval. On 21October, the Israeli destroyer "Eilat", which had entered Egyptian territorial waters, was attacked and sunk by two Egyptian rocket boats.[246] These operations, albeit very limited militarily and started by Israeli initiatives, had a strong effect, especially with the magnifying effect of propaganda, in restoring some of the morale among the army and the population.

Politically, Nasser used the defeat to rally Arab support. Although he lost much of his prestige, he gained more Arab support than expected and his ordeal in Yemen, as well as the serious enmity with Faisal, the King of Saudi Arabia, was ended at the Khartoum Conference, of the League of Arab States. The conference sanctioned the famous "Three Nos" declaration: no legitimizing Israel, no direct negotiation with it, and no peace with it. It also sanctioned extensive military and financial aid to Egypt.

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[245] Gamasy, *Memoirs: the 1973 War,* pp.151-154.
[246] Gamasy, *Memoirs: the 1973 War,* pp.151-154.

Relations with the US were formally cut, and Egypt moved totally into the Soviet camp. An early visit after the defeat by some of the Soviet political and military leadership set the scene for a new era in which military aid was expanded in all aspects: weapons, organisation, education and training, and advisory roles.[247] Only a few months after the war, Egypt had restored its armed forces.

In terms of the outcome of the war, however, **Egypt** had not achieved any of its policy aims and had experienced huge damage politically, militarily, economically and in terms of human life. Nevertheless, it did not yield its political will to Israel's political aims whether in security and restoring deterrence, or in accepting a disadvantageous peace, or even an interim agreement for non-aggression.

On the Israeli side, three scales of political aims and the ability to achieve them should be acknowledged.

The political motivation for launching the war was restoring the power of deterrence and security, avoiding another war soon, and this aim underpinned all political and military discussions before the decision to go to war. This aim clearly was not achieved as two major wars were to follow the 1967 War and the front was never silent.[248] Although Israel's post-war policy, solidifying her occupation of Sinai and other territories and the annexation of Jerusalem, played a role in this escalation, the military outcome and its scale, as discussed earlier, left no choice for the Egyptians.

Secondly, a further political aim mentioned in the government decision to go to war was to "release the tightening pressure which was forming around Israel". Hence, this aim was just to avert the *exterminating* offensive against Israel and it was clearly achieved. However, as has been explained, this aim was a product of the feeling of existential danger which suffused both the people and the propaganda and was helped intentionally by the government and the military for mobilization and diplomatic purposes. All contemporary Israeli and US estimates though predicted a clear military victory in any military exchange with Arab forces. The new and intensified Egyptian deployments in Sinai and the Egyptian-Jordanian pact were indications of a heavier potential price to be paid for any future Israeli offensive. But they could never have been seen as an existential threat.

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[247] A full account of this visit and its political results especially can be found in the memoirs of Mahmoud Riadh who was the Egyptian Foreign Minister, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East,* was translated into English from (Arabic) (Beirut: Arabic Institution for Publishing, 1987) p. 94-96.

[248] This was in contrast to the euphoric and illogical claim of Sharon just after the war "the Egyptian Army is destroyed. My generation will not fight again!", quoted in Avi Shlaim, "Israel: Poor Little Samson", p.55.

Thirdly, there was a set of desired, and possible, political end states for the war which ranged from crippling Nasser's regime, an aim perhaps shared by the US, reaching an interim agreement for non-aggression or even a comprehensive regional peace as the Israeli leadership seems to have expected naively after the decisive military outcome -- as illustrated by Dayan's famous comment "we are expecting a phone call from Arabs."[249] These aims were not, it should be stressed, formally adopted before launching the war and, obviously, they were not achieved by this war.

To conclude, Egypt did not achieve any political aim and, while it managed to prevent Israel attaining many of the political aims it had hoped to achieve, it paid an enormous price. Israel, on the other hand, did not achieve the motivating political aim of the war or its theoretically and implicitly political resolution aims. On the other hand, she achieved two aims: relieving the existential danger, and preserving the right of navigation in Aqaba. **This outcome would count as low strategic advantage for Israel.**

The causal link tracing results in a slightly diverted link. Low advantageous ability for Israel (lower medium Israeli practical ability versus low Egyptian) would give her a relative superiority but she had low strategic advantage. This resulted, as we indicated earlier, from the strategic leverage of early operational decisiveness favouring Israel. But weak strategic ability itself prevented Israel from translating this exceptional decisiveness on the battlefield, into a political winning. Rather, it even invited another two wars of a major scale.

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[249] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy", p 571.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Arab-Israeli *Regular* Wars *II*

Attrition War

1973 (the Southern Front)

Origins and Background

The Attrition War

The origins of the 1973 War (known as the Yom Kippur War in Israel, and the Ramadan War and the 6th October War in Egypt) go back to the humiliating Arab defeat in 1967 and the subsequent stasis of all diplomatic endeavours. The War of Attrition lasted from March 1968 to July 1970 and was ended by a cease-fire agreement negotiated through William Rogers[1] in July 1970. It affected both sides' thinking about the next war in different ways.

The first phase of this war started in September 1968, when Nasser felt that his army had restored its main fighting ability, with extended artillery barrages across the Suez Canal. The IDF, which did not have strong defences yet in place, or matching artillery capabilities, aimed to coerce the Egyptians by air strikes targeting oil refineries and civilian targets in the Canal cities, and deep strikes against the Nag'a Hammadi Dam in Upper Egypt. The IDF also decided to build a strong forward defence line known as the Bar-Lev line. Nasser halted this phase and took preparatory measures: evacuating the population of the Canal cities, transferring the oil refineries, establishing an air-defence curtain of SAM-2 missiles, and creating local militias from the domestic population with air guns to guard vital infrastructure.[2]

The second phase started more aggressively in March 1969 with extensive Egyptian artillery barrages and commando operations mainly against the forward Bar-Lev line but also reaching deep into Sinai, albeit with less success. The most daring operation was the Shadwan Island battle in January 1970 and the detonation of three platforms in Eilat port in December 1969.[3]

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[1] William Rogers, the US Secretary of State who proposed an interim period of cease-fire while both sides participated in indirect negotiations on the implementation of UN Resolution 242 which required the Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the Arabs' acceptance of its regional integrity. For more details see William B. Quant, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, (Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 2001) pp. 67-74.

[2] Mohamed Fawzy, *The Three Years War 1967-1970* in Arabic (Cairo: Dar Al-Mostaqbal, 1995), pp.265,332. For an English translation see Youssef Aboul-Enein (Ed), *Reconstructing a Shattered Egyptian Army (1967 to 1971): War Minister Gen. Mohamad Fawzi's Memoirs* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2014).

The Egyptian strategy aimed, politically, to force Israel to make diplomatic concessions and to destabilize the situation in the Middle East to force the super powers to intervene with diplomatic initiatives. Strategically, Egypt aimed to launch wearing-down operations targeting Israel's strategic vulnerabilities: casualty sensitivities and a lack of tolerance for long and onerous mobilization. However, Israel searched for and exploited Nasser's regime sensitivities too.[4]

After a period of Israeli commando operations aiming at demoralizing Nasser's army, such as the operation at Al Jazeera al Khadraa in July where local radar had been detected, an operation at Ras-Gharib where sophisticated Russian radar (P21) was captured, and other harassing operations in Za'afrana and the Red Sea zone, Israel moved to an air strikes campaign in July 1969. The campaign sought to destroy the SAM curtain first, which was achieved by October 1969, then to launch strategic bombing attacks on Egyptian civilian and industrial nerve-centres in the Delta, which represented ***the third phase*** of the War of Attrition. Israel's intention was to delegitimize Nasser as protector of the population and undermine Egypt's strategy to force her to stop the war, so that no diplomatic solutions would be imposed on Israel against her wishes.[5]

Nasser went to the USSR in January 1970 and asked the Kremlin to take over his air defence until Egypt could establish a modernized SAM curtain, and to provide him with long-range bombers to retaliate against Israel for her deep bombing campaign.

The USSR turned down the second request but acquiesced to the first. It provided Egypt with around 80 SAM-3s and thousands of portable SAM-7 batteries. It also transferred the modern version of the MiG 21 and its supporting technology. In July, Israel was shocked by the vulnerability of her Phantoms to the newly- developed air defences. However, she shot down five MiGs with their Soviet pilots. The US intervened with a plan developed by the Secretary of State which was accepted by both sides for different reasons.[6]

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[3] General Mohamed Fawzy, *The Three Years War*, pp.267-328.

[4] Yacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition, 1969-1970* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1980) pp. 50-59.

[5] Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition*, pp. 120-125.

Israel was eager to stop the costly attrition and did not wish to confront the Russians directly. Nasser also doubted the long-term viability of his strategy of attrition and aimed to use the interim period before the ceasefire secretly to move his anti-defence layer forward to cover the western side of Sinai; [7] a prerequisite for any future crossing.

While the War of Attrition was ongoing, another version of **"security concept" was developed** in Israel which proposed that Egypt would not embark on a major confrontation before she had a superior or at least matching air power capacity (or long-range bomber capacity since they needed better intercepting facilities[8]). The lessons of the War of Attrition War caused a rapid maturing in the Egyptian political-military leadership at all levels: strategic, operational and tactical, as will be discussed below.

Waiting

The cease-fire in July 1970 was for 3 months. Nasser died at the end of September and the cease-fire was then renewed by the new President Anwar Sadat for another period and was continually renewed till August 1971. Sadat made several announcements during 1971 and 1972 about embarking upon a liberation war as a result of Israel's rejection of his diplomatic initiatives in February 1971. He had proposed an interim measure of mutual withdrawal, the opening of the Canal, and an initiative for a full peace agreement based on a total Israeli retreat.[9]

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[6] William Quant, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2005) pp.67-74.

[7] For detailed accounts on the War of Attrition see: Bar-Siman-Tov, *Attrition War*; Mohamed Abdel Ghani El-Gamasy , *The October War: Memoirs of Field Marshal El-Gamasy of Egypt* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1993) p. 163-184; Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp. 267-346; Chaim Herzog, *Arab Israeli Wars, War and Peace in the Middle East* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2010) pp. 193- 222; Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War*: *Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2002) pp.88-98.

[8] Chaim Herzog, *The War of Atonement: The Inside Story of the Yom Kippur War* (Havertown PA: Casemate Publishers, 2010) pp. 1-13.

As his deadlines for re-igniting the conflict passed without action, his excuses were seen as disingenuous by his domestic audience and the wider Arab world which had become a major source of funding for Egypt after the 1967 Khartoum Conference. Anger among the Egyptian people, especially university students, rose.

Sadat had major difficulties in taking the decision to go to war, notably the inability of the army to execute a major plan for liberating Sinai given its structural weakness in airpower and, to a lesser extent, its armoured capability. This weakness was recognised by the military leaders, mainly General Sadeq, the General Commander and War Minister, but he also did not believe in the fruitfulness of more limited operations as the political achievement would be in the hands of an untrustworthy diplomatic process.[10]

Sadat was frustrated also by the USSR's refusal to supply weapons the Egyptians considered essential for a major offensive, mainly long-range bombers or surface-surface missiles to deter Israel from repeating the strategic air operations which had crippled the Egyptian tempo in the War of Attrition. In these circumstances, his theory of a limited war but at a higher scale and of a shorter duration than the War of Attrition would be used to ignite a diplomatic process.[11] As Lieberman indicated, it was a creative discovery which acknowledged the limits of successful deterrence that had been achieved by the end of the War of Attrition and the inherent vulnerabilities of the Egyptian Army, but then aimed to "design around" these by building another strategy.[12]

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[9] Quant, *Peace Process*, pp.88-92.

[10] Saad Al-Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez* (San Francisco: American Mideast Research, Revised English Edition, 2003).

[11] Dani Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for Yom Kippur* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland,2009) pp.56-60.

On 12 October 1972, Sadat informed the Supreme Military Council of his decision to fight "a limited war aiming to move [the] diplomatic process by restoring the military initiative, regaining Egyptian honour and enhancing Israeli losses". He said this could be achieved by a limited offensive aiming to cross the Suez Canal and advance as far as the fighting capabilities of the army would allow. The next day he relieved General Sadeq of his command as he had shown some reluctance, together with other military leaders, and appointed General Ahmed Ismail to achieve this mission.

Early in 1971, General Shazly was appointed Chief of Staff responsible for regenerating and restructuring the Egyptian Army, and General Gamasy was appointed head of the operations section in 1972 to be more directly involved with the planning and execution of actual operations. Both generals were under the orders of Ismail, the General Commander and War Minister, who took office in October 1972.

Relations with US President Nixon improved in the last days of Nasser, and moved even further forward with Sadat. The latter had positive diplomatic exchanges with Nixon in 1971-2 although they did not result in any positive outcome. In fact, as Sadat later argued, the statement made by Kissinger early in 1973 that diplomatic relations could not reasonably be resumed while the situation was static was one of the strongest motivations for Egypt to contemplate re-starting the war.[13]

In July 1972, Sadat made a serious change in Egypt's strategic orientation by expelling almost all the Soviet advisers, who by then numbered some 12,000, as a direct response to the USSR's refusal to supply requested armaments. The move also sought implicitly to pave the way for more positive relations with the US which

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[12] Elli Lieberman, *Reconceptualising Deterrence: Nudging towards Rationality in Middle Eastern Rivalries* (London: Routledge 2013) pp.169-170.

[13] Anwar El-Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York City: HarperCollins, 1978) p.238.

Sadat considered the only player which could lead the diplomatic process he hoped would result from his proposed limited war.

In Israel, the parties of the medium left, Mapai, Ahdot HaAvoda and Ravi, united in 1968 to form the Labour Party and formed a new government in a coalition with the far Left Mapam. After the death of Prime Minister Eshkol in 1969, Golda Meir became head of the government. With the new developments in 1970, a national unity government was proposed but the right-wing party Gahal withdrew in protest at the consideration of Rogers's initiative for acknowledging Egyptian sovereignty over Sinai.[14]

The Labour government had since 1969 developed an unwritten but agreed policy (known as *Tora Shebe'al Peh*) to determine the principles governing the political fate of the occupied territories in the future. This policy stated that in the case of the Egyptian front, Sharm Al-Sheikh should be kept in Israeli hands, with a supply corridor at the western bank of Aqaba Gulf linking it to Eilat in any future peace agreement with Egypt. Nevertheless, some differences of opinion existed, ranging from Gahal which demanded control of East Sinai plus Sharm, to Mapam's vision of a total withdrawal from Sinai in return for peace.[15] In any case, Israel, which was relieved by the death of Nasser, turned down all peace proposals from Sadat.

The initial Egyptian war plan was completed in January 1973, and two time-scale options were given -- for the war to start either in May or October 1973. The decision was taken in April for the second date, for reasons discussed below. Sadat issued the strategic directive in September and the war erupted at 2pm Cairo time on 6 October 1973, with short and massive air strikes followed by artillery bombardments to cover the waves of Egyptian commandos crossing the Suez Canal.[16]

In Israel, early warnings and suspicions in the political-military leadership were put aside until Meir confirmed the Egyptian intention to fight early on the morning of 6

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[14] Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) pp. 459-462.

[15] Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*, pp. 459-462.

[16] Gamasy, *The October War: Memoirs,* pp.265-269; Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography,* p.237.

October. A pre-emptive attack was ruled out, as well as full mobilization in favour of a more limited attack. However, a few hours later a decision was taken for total mobilization of the army, which depends mostly on reservists; a step that was too late and restricted by the nature of Yom Kippur when all forms of public communication and broadcasting were out of service.

The Strategic Ability of Egypt

The Conceptual Layer

In the Egyptian strategic leadership responsible for the 1973 War, three figures were engaged with variable importance in the strategic layout of war; President Anwar Sadat, the War Minister and General Commander Field Marshal Ahmed Ismail and the Chief of Staff General Sa'ad-Addin el-Shazly.

Sadat was the uncontested strategist responsible for determining the political aims and strategic routes, as he frequently claimed publicly and in private debates. In addition to his book "In Search of Identity", Sadat's ideas were dispersed in public speeches, interviews,[17] and remarks and observations, as well as others attributed to him in his meetings, especially with military leaders.

Sadat had the military with the rank of major and hardly attended any higher military education, but in 1950 he resumed his military career for a short time until the 1952 revolution when he became a member of the Revolutionary Command Council. During his political career until October 1970, when he became President after Nasser's death, he was a prominent figure who held a number of civilian positions in Nasser's regime, including Head of the Legislative Council "The Nation's Council", and General Secretary of the Islamic Conference Organization, and he maintained close relations with Nasser until his death, partly due to his apparent lack of political ambition.

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[17] The most famous of these interviews about the 1973 War strategy were: with the Lebanese newspaper Al-Nahar on 29 March 1974, with the Egyptian Akhbar Al-Yom on 3 April 1974, and his speech broadcast on Cairo radio on 18 April 1974.

Reviewing Sadat's writing and his expressed opinions shows he was well acquainted with basic strategic ideas: war as a tool in the hands of policy, the nature of strategic effect needed to shape the enemy's calculations and perception, the difference between a war with total aims which requires the eradication of the enemy's military power and a war with limited aims which requires a meticulous combination of battlefield achievements and diplomatic moves. His strategy for the 1973 war, which aimed to demolish the Israeli "national security theory" and then set up a diplomatic process, was strong evidence of his strategic competency.[18]

However, he also showed signs of misunderstanding the nature of strategy. These misconceptions should not be ascribed to his personality aberrations (as he consistently overestimated his skills and ability which led him to impose awkward orders on the military command) nor to his practical mistakes in strategic moves (which will be reviewed below) as will be shown. The point here is that Sadat indicated many times his total and exclusive responsibility to run strategy in contrast to his military that (he averred) should run operations and emphasised many times that the military should not even be kept aware of diplomatic activity.[19]

Also, Sadat did not share Nasser's affinity for reading strategic treatises; rather, given his artistic background, he was interested in more cultural western works. [20]

Field Marshal Ismail, the Chief of Staff, was fired after the Israeli bombing of Ras Za'farana in 1969. He was then called by Sadat to head the General Intelligence section in 1971. After Sadeq was fired, Ismail was appointed by Sadat as War Minister and General Commander. Ismail was a disciplined commander but he was not known as a theorist or planner. He left two major documents conveying his ideas: an extended interview with Heikal[21] and unedited memoirs directed mainly to the general public. In his interview he conveyed the same ideas as Sadat regarding the strategic rationale behind the conduct of the war. However, the quality of his strategic leadership, including his weak theoretical background, remains controversial, discredited by Shazly and moderately praised by Gamasy.[22] Researchers have supported both positions.[23]

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[18] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.31-39; Gamasy, *The October War: Memoirs*, pp.278-279.

[19] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* p.180; Gamasy, *The October War: Memoirs*, p.393.

[20] Mohamed H. Heikal, *Autumn of Fury: The Story of the Beginning and End of Sadat's Era* (Cairo: Al-Ahram, 1988, Arabic) pp.65-67.

[21] Al-Ahram newspaper on 18 November 1973.

Saad el-Shazly was the most enlightened Egyptian military leader of the period. He was the founder of the paratrooper brigade and held several high-ranking military positions including command of the combined paratrooper and commando forces and the Red Sea regional command. He had completed his higher military education at the Nasser Academy and the High War College course in the USSR.

In his account of the war, 'The Crossing of the Suez", Shazly gave clear explanations of how all defence policies for regenerating the military's fighting power and military planning were chosen to match the proportional Egyptian capability vis-à-vis the Israeli while attaining the operational outcome required by a war with limited strategic scope.[24]

However, Shazly's ideas showed two conceptual shortcomings. The first was the inability to link operational outcomes to a higher strategic effect which would be compatible with Egypt's explicit policy aims.

In his treatise, he only touched on this strategic area once when he gave his own proposal on the strategic rationale for how a competent war with limited aims could suit the policy of liberating the Arab territories occupied in 1967. He proposed that the Israelis would suffer huge losses, and also be forced to keep their soldiers mobilized for a long time: this would, he argued, be sufficient to achieve a "decisive" victory.[25] But he did not provide evidence that this proposal was even known to the

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[22] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.184-189; Gamasy, *The October War: Memoirs*, p.394.

[23] Pollack, *Arabs at War;* Brooks, *Shaping Strategy*, praised him but other historical books, including the Israelis, only highlighted the role of Shazly.

[24] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.31-36.

[25] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.31-36.

Egyptian high command before and during the war, let alone adopted. Further, Shazly did not examine the applicability of this proposal to the situation in 1973 given the experience of the War of Attrition and the Israeli dependence on external support.

The other shortcoming was his claim, when he criticized Sadat's decisions during the war, that the political leadership's intervention in the course of operations was catastrophic and should never be allowed on principle. This could have been, in part, a reaction to Sadat's over-interventions that ignored military expertise and capabilities but, as Howeidy clearly indicated, the claim that politicians should not interfere in operations missed the strategic wisdom. The problem in this case was in the *manner* of political intervention rather than in its principle.[26]

Regarding **strategic education**, Egypt did not have a formal structure for educating strategists before 1966, when the National Defence College was established as a part of the Nasser Higher Military Academy. It operated from 1967, but the High War College, the other part of the Nasser Academy, did not run courses until the 1973 war. However, the National Defence College did not attract many political and military commanders who tended only to have exposure to the High War College which focused on tactical and operational affairs.[27] Most of the educational missions to the USSR also focussed mainly on the operational and even tactical levels.

To conclude, the strategic leadership in Egypt by 1973 was much closer to what is strategic and had a good understanding of strategic principles and could build up strategic proposals. However, shortcomings and lack of acquaintance with strategic theories also existed. This mixed ability manifested itself in the generally good strategic concept of the 1973 war, the weakness of the links between operational practice and strategic needs, and lack of clarity in political aims, as will be shown. **The grade of this tier is medium.**

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[26] Amin Howeidy, *The Lost Opportunities: The Decisive Decisions in Attrition and October Wars* (Beirut: Al-Matbou'at Publications, 1992, Arabic) pp. 42-43. Howeidy was the War Minister for a short period after the 1967 War and then he became the Chief of General Intelligence.

[27] Although no evidence could be gathered on the formal curricula of both colleges, Dani Asher included valuable sources in his study extricated from the documents held by the IDF when it ran through the command and managerial posts of the third army west of the Canal. These documents included many Nasser Academy's teachings and they were purely operational and tactical.

Institutional Layer

Relational

Civil-military relations in the 1973 War were an extension of the transformation Nasser fostered after the 1967 war. The Pre-1967 system, as has been discussed, was odd as it made Amer the General Commander while both the Chief of Staff, who had limited responsibilities, and the War Minister were subordinate to him. This system together with the military's tutelage over defence as well as many civilian files had grave strategic consequences.

The first War Minister after the 1967 War, Amin Howeidy, recommended a more democratic, but still strategically useful, structure with the War Minister, subordinate to the President and overseen by the legislature, managing the armed forces to achieve government policy. The General Commander in this system should have been the Chief of Staff, with responsibility for planning and commanding the armed forces under the direct supervision of the War Minister.[28]

However, Nasser wanted more control over the armed forces because of his obsession with the security of the regime, so he refused Howeidy's proposal. Howeidy resigned and Nasser appointed Fawzy, the Chief of Staff, to be War Minister at the same time; an arrangement that had been in force before 1962.

Fawzy's proposal in 1968 was accepted by Nasser who sanctioned Law No.4 on "The Command and Control of Armed Forces". The law emphasised the roles of the War Minister and General Commander, the two posts which would be held by the same person. Below him, the Chief of Staff is responsible for developing and training the armed forces and the Chief of Operations manages planning and helps the higher command in commanding operations. The law also acknowledged the role of the National Defence Council composed of the Ministers of War, Foreign Affairs, Justice and the Economy, as responsible for orchestrating state resources for defence and developing a national security strategy.[29]

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[28] Howeidy, *The Lost Opportunities,* pp.87- 88.

Although the new system put an end to chaos in political-military relations and the military command, it created different structural problems. Firstly, there was no real and critical supervision over the armed forces except from the President who had limited time and possibly skills. Second, it gave the President unprecedented and exclusive powers over the military which paved the way to the promotion of people likely to placate rather than challenge him, although not as egregiously as in Amer's era. However, both Nasser and Sadat realized the necessity of more professional and able military commanders.[30]

Third, a core problem, as discussed in the previous chapter, was that combining the military command and political oversight in the single post of War Minister meant that if he was more powerful than the President, as was the case before 1967, strategy would be militarized and not critically assessed.

But if the War Minister was much weaker than the President, as in 1973, the military stance in strategy dialogue is weakened and the strategic proposals do not match the political aims to the operational capabilities, which add to the problem of over-involvement of politicians in military decisions.

Fourth, as the law permitted many of the responsibilities of the National Defence Council to be delegated to the President, the council became rudimentary and responsible only for mobilization and rubber-stamping the President's decisions, rather than a comprehensive platform for strategy- making.

In the 1973 War all these abnormalities existed, with Sadat as Supreme Commander, Ismail the War Minister and General Commander, and Shazly the Chief of Staff, and the National Defence Committee a rudimentary body. Sadat appointed Hafez Ismail as his National Security Adviser, which turned out in reality to be merely the President's international messenger and secretary for information.[31]

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[29] Fawzy, *October War*, pp.237-239.

[30] Pollack, *Arabs at War*, pp.98-99.

After overcoming internal turmoil in 1971, when pro-Nasser power centres including Fawzy planned a coup, Sadat replaced Fawzy with General Sadeq and became the uncontested ruler of the country.

After this victory Sadat would not tolerate any sign of opposition, or even opinions that challenged his intentions. He fired General Sadeq and two functional commanders in the famous meeting of October 1972 when the two expressed scepticism about his proposal of limited war. He launched a stormy attack on Sadeq at the meeting, and two other commanders who tried to mediate the difference in opinions were also fired.[32] This meeting and its results hardened the position of Sadat further, and created an attitude in the military command of accepting Sadat's orders without discussion or reservations.

Functional

The functional criteria of the Egyptian strategic institutional layers in the 1973 War were definitely much better than those in the 1967 War, albeit with some problems which gravely affected the strategy making.

Information sharing was much improved but had limitations. Passing information from the military to the President became smooth and professional. The professionalization of the intelligence sectors, both Military Intelligence and General Intelligence, and their exclusion from politics helped in improving the quality of all intelligence tasks; information gathering, analysis, counter-intelligence and covert operations. However, as Sadat excluded all other figures, military and civilians, from strategy making due to his conviction that the strategic task was his exclusive prerogative, there was no information sharing between different departments unless personally conveyed by Sadat himself.

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[31] Hafez Ismail, *Egyptian National Security in the Age of Challenges* (Cairo: Al-Ahram, 2001, Arabic).

[32] Nearly identical accounts of this meeting can be found in Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.124-140 and Gamasy, *The October War*, pp.225-228.

For example, during his meetings with the Supreme Military Council during the war, he kept them ignorant of some of the diplomatic moves then underway, and their motivations and consequences.[33]

Comprehensive and critical debates were also mostly absent due to Sadat's exclusive control of strategy making and the absence of a serious platform for strategy making which combined the resources of all departments. The National Defence Council was put aside and became inactive.[34] Also, Sadat's tight control over the military, his intolerance of criticism and his use of a war minister with a weak personality[35] made his orders impossible to critique or question.

The **authority** of political leadership over the military was clear and strong but it was extreme and jeopardized the other necessary function, **the formidable stand of the military.**

Interestingly, when Brooks analysed the civil-military relations in the 1973 War, she rightly identified the balance of power, the improved functions in information sharing, military competency in assessing own capability and clear authorization.[36] She also indicated weak comprehensive and critical analysis, but she did not put her finger on the negative element of Sadat's encroachment on the military standing and expertise and his over-involvement in operational, even tactical, details. This element was actually missed in her theoretical model as mentioned earlier. Hence, she *overestimated* both the quality of civil military relations and the strategic outcome of the war.

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[33] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, p.180; Gamasy, *The October War,* p.393 and pp.450-452.

[34] Hafiz Ismail who was Sadat's National Security Adviser pointed out to Sadat's exclusive management style and how the National Security Council was a rudimentary structure. He said, "The President was alone, but it was he who chose to be alone". Ismail, *Egyptian National Security in the Age of Challenges* (Cairo: Al-Ahram 2001, Arabic) p.360

[35] Shazly discredited Ismail's personality. He indicated that Ismail having been fired twice from highly sensitive positions, first as Sinai Chief of Staff after 1967, then as Chief of General Staff after Za'afrana in 1969, made him a weak person with a hesitant attitude. Although some of Shazly's criticism may be due to the toxic relations between them that went back to 1965, there is some credibility in Shazly's claims because of the attitude of Ismail towards Sadat's orders of extending the offensive.

[36] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy,* pp.123-142.

Brooks provided a major justification for Sadat's military over-involvement and exclusive strategy making by saying it was needed to enable the imposition of his overarching political-strategic agenda of a limited war to be followed by a peace initiative.[37] However, there are two fallacies in this claim:

Firstly, Sadat had already become the real ruler of the country with clear authority over the military. Not one of his military commanders was looking to advance a contesting political/strategic agenda. For example, Shazly's vigorous opposition to Sadat's decisions in the second half of the war was based only on operational calculations that mismatched the military orders. Shazly himself was silent after being marginalised and replaced. He even accepted a diplomatic position that was offered by Sadat and kept silent until he was attacked by Sadat's regime which sought to blame him for the not brilliant military outcome.

Second, as is discussed later, Sadat's attitude in giving military orders that were not operationally reasonable, and his inefficiency in maintaining a clear policy were solely responsible for the military dilemma at the end of the war. Sadat himself acknowledged the *sub-optimum* outcome as he was compelled to accept a war outcome lower than he aimed for.

These mixed features (clear authorization, suboptimum information sharing, moderate critical assessment and weakness in the domains of formidable position of military and the strategic intervention of politicians) give the Egyptian institutional layer a lower medium grade.

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[37] Brooks, *Shaping Strategy,* pp.123-142.

The Practical Layer

Detailed Strategies

Generating detailed strategies not only dictates how each side is able to formulate *planning* at the grand and military strategic level but, as the nature of strategy requires, how each side is able to *adapt* its strategies to the evolving opportunities, blunders or changing contexts of the war.

Policy and Grand Strategy

Identifying war aims for a state sometimes becomes a complex task as was discussed in the Introduction. There is a possibility of *change* under the dynamic nature of war events, and a possible change of the political ideology or agenda of the leaders, and change can be a result of a disorganized decision-making system which can present contested or obscure representations of the war aims.

As changing the political aims in the 1973 War will be discussed later, it is important to identify **which war aims the military events opened with.**

Here too, there are two conceptual questions that need to be addressed which relate in part to political analysis of the Arab-Israeli Wars, the nature of domestic politics, and to the strategic level of analysis.

The **first** question is: shall Egypt be considered an *initiator* and therefore be seen as having positive aims, and Israel as a *responder* in which case her aims should be considered as negative (to keep the status quo)?

This is obviously not totally accurate as Egypt's territories had been occupied since 1967, so 1973 war efforts may be recognized offensive operations under a defensive strategy if we use Michael Handel's nomenclature.[38] Israel may claim also that, prior to 5 June 1967, Egypt pursued positive aims, namely the destruction of Israel, and therefore its occupation of land was a defensive strategy. However, as explained in the last chapter, the real Israeli political aim in 1967 was to restore its deterrent ability and open the Tiran Strait rather than to abort an Egyptian war of extermination which the latter was never able to achieve.

This research is not intended to trace the legal or moral roots behind each war, or to support a specific position; rather, it focuses on answering the strategic question: how each side used its power, mainly military, to achieve its political aims and this may touch on each side's ability to *use the moral or legal claims* in their strategy.

Egypt launched the war under the umbrella of her acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), which required "*Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces* ***from territories occupied*** *in the recent conflict*".[39] Egypt accepted UN resolution 242 and Rogers' initiative. Sadat announced that any war would be used to "liberate the occupied territories in 1967 and look for a 'just' solution for Palestinians". Hence, Egypt covered herself legally in the international arena in this war, regardless of its real political aims, in contrast to Israel which was considered an aggressor; the reverse of the 1967 status when the Israeli offensive was considered a reaction to an existential threat by the international community -- apart from the Eastern Bloc and France.

Second, to assess the real intentions of Sadat in launching the 1973 war, we need to look at Egyptian **domestic politics** and political ideology.

Nationalists and Nasserites in Egypt, headed by Heikal, claimed that Sadat changed Egypt's vision of its international and regional role and launched the war only with the aim of liberating Sinai and positioning Egypt within a regional order, promoted by the US to form a strategic "triangle"[40] of US-Egypt-Israel which could reach a unilateral peaceful resolution at the expense of the wider Arab cause.

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[38] Michael Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: the Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute security" in Murray et al., *The Making of Strategy*, p.553

[39] Yehuda Lukacs, *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Documentary Record 1967-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.1.

Sadat's advocates claim that he wanted peace with Israel on condition of returning to the 4 June 1967 borders and a just solution for Palestinian refugees, which was what Nasser envisioned, at least formally, when he accepted Resolution 242 and the Rogers initiative.

A third interpretation was adopted by Israeli hawks including Mordechai Gur, the COS between 1974-1978, and was echoed by Harkabi when he claimed that Sadat really aimed at destroying Israel but followed Tunisian President Habib Bourquiba's piecemeal strategy.[41] Gur raised the same concern in 1978.[42]

Obviously, Sadat accepted in the end a unilateral peace with Israel in a newly formed strategic triangle; actually he aspired to replace Israel in maintaining US interests in the region as he did in the Ethiopian-Somali conflict in the late 1970s.[43] This was the main objective of Kissinger's strategy in dealing with the war: to secure a partial victory for Israel to preserve US' credibility without humiliating the Arabs, so that they could be sure they had to join the US to achieve any political gains.[44]

The question remains whether Sadat, when he changed the policy aims of Egypt and her vision of her regional and international role, was acting on a different *political ideology* to the modified Nasserite one after 1967, or whether he just continued on Nasser's trajectory and then responded to the hard *political and strategic effects* of the 1973 War. It is difficult to provide a definitive answer, although it is arguable that it was a mixture of ideology and pragmatism and that the change in policy was apparent only after the military operations ended.

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[40] This term is borrowed from Kenneth Stein, "Evolving Diplomatic Policy from the War: The US, Egyptian, and Israeli Triangle", in Asaf Siniver, *The October 1937 War: Politics, Diplomacy and Legacy* (London: Hurst & Co, 2012) p.290.

[41] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Arab Strategies and Israel's Response* (New York: The Free Press, 1977).

[42] Yehuda Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) p.117.

[43] Amos, *Arab Israeli, Military/Political Relations*, pp. 230-239.

[44] This was a very clear theme in the face to face meetings between Sadat and Kissinger. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval, the Second Volume of his Classic Memoirs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982) p.612, 768-770, 811-812.

Sadat prescribed "specific" political aims based on Nasser's modified approach of a common solution based on Resolution 242 which required strategic needs to be accomplished by the military forces in the opening of the war. This was mentioned clearly in the Strategic Directive: "The force should be used to smash the security concept and to increase its heavy losses, within the capabilities of the armed forces", and this was generally conceived to be used to establish a more favourable diplomatic process

The strategy also targeted the superpowers, especially the US, to push Israel towards a more compliant attitude, since within the prevailing Cold War dynamic of détente both Superpowers would intervene in favour of de-escalation. .

Sadat used the war as a gamble to increase the diplomatic potential depending on the scale of military achievements. If the war proved successful he would press for higher policy aims, but if it was modest or mixed (as it turned out to be), he would be content with achieving lesser policy aims which would be achievable by incorporating himself within the US regional alliance and totally jettisoning the USSR. Nevertheless, the eagerness with which he was looking for this change[45] and the level of compliance he showed diplomatically, or as Golan illustrated, was high:

> To strengthen his argument, Kissinger told the Israelis that he was amazed by Sadat's behaviour. The Egyptian president was so far not using his full political power created by the new international situation in negotiating an agreement. Indeed, Kissinger thought that Sadat could have used the international situation to achieve an overall agreement on his terms. At the

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[45] Kissinger for example made clear the comparison between the offer Assad gave to the US for better relations which was based on "cold" strategic necessities, and was turned down for many reasons, and that of Sadat. Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, p.411 & pp.202-203.

> most, said Kissinger, *Sadat would have risked a new war*, which the whole world would blame on Israel anyway.[46]

But Sadat sought peace and excluded further use of force too early for a comprehensive settlement and too late for a ceasefire with an advantageous operational position.

He quit the USSR patronage and submitted to Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy". Although this was very profitable for the American strategy in the war, which sought to uproot the USSR from the region and become the sole game decider, the change worked very badly for Egypt as the US could not be a genuine and objective mediator, and the loss of Soviet support reduced Egypt's military and political status.

Also, Kissinger's step by step diplomacy, which separated short-term and long-term settlements,[47] deprived Egypt of much of her right to delegitimize important Israeli gains such as the encirclement of Third Army, which resulted from Israel ignoring UNSC resolutions 238/9. Egypt accepted Kissinger's proposal to deal with the military situation as de-facto and to devote the first phase of negotiations to relieving this encirclement (Six Principles in November 1973) in the hope of a better peace under US direction.[48]

In addition to the concessions made in the First Disengagement, this was puzzling for both Kissinger and Meir and indicated that personal and ideological elements facilitated this policy transformation rather than mere strategic calculations. [49]

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[46] Matti Golan, *Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger: Step by Step Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Colchester: The Book Service Ltd, 1976) p.152 (my emphasis).

[47] Mathew Ferraro, *Tough Going: Anglo-American Relations and the Yom Kippur War of 1973* (New York: iUniverse, 2007), pp113-114.

[48] Kissinger's tactics to reach this were revealed in his memoir, *Years of Upheaval*, pp.639-640.

[49] Sadat was very compliant to Kissinger's and Israeli proposals as in "the six points" before the First Disengagement when he accepted deploying forces with only 8000 manpower on the East Bank with 30 tanks and distancing the air defence 30 km west of the Canal, Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 833-845.

The question of what were the Egyptian war aims raises another concern related to the **strategic level of analysis.**

From the military strategic perspective, what policy required the military means to accomplish was almost clear in the short run: demolishing Israel's security concept in order to warm up the regional atmosphere to promote a diplomatic process and coerce Israel to accept this and yield some occupied territory. However, there was no consensus or even discussion on the **scale** of this coercion.

But from a grand strategic perspective, ambiguities prevailed, very similar to the Israeli case in 1967, as to how the war would be strategically managed for long-term effects. As stated before, grand strategy has two tasks, the orchestration of the means of power to achieve policy ends, and to plan for the future.

For the first task of grand strategy Sadat planned and executed an efficient **mobilization** of all state resources of power to serve the military effort.[50] He also planned an astonishing campaign of **deception/surprise**, benefiting from his previous unkept promises and the strong belief in Israel and much of the world that Egypt was not able or willing to fight.[51]

Also, in Disengagement II, he readily accepted all the components of the Israeli proposals regarding non-belligerency, such as declaring if another Arab state was attacked or launched an offensive or shaped media policy or cut military relations with the USSR and helped in stopping the economic warfare. Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, pp.385-421.

In a reply to Meir's question, "*Why is he doing that*?", Kissinger said that "*Sadat had fallen victim to human weakness. It was the psychology of a politician who wanted to see himself – and quickly - riding triumphantly in an open car through the city of Suez with thousands of Egyptians cheering him*". Golan, *Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger*, pp. 152-153. However, in his formal memoir, Kissinger told Meir that the difference between Sadat and other Arab leaders was his true belief in peace. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p.837.

[50] Mohamed A. Hatem, *The Strategic Surprise in the October War 1973* (Cairo: Al-Ahram 1999, Arabic). Hatem was the Deputy Prime Minister in the War Cabinet which was led by Sadat himself and he was responsible for war preparation on the domestic front.

[51] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, pp. 90-97.

Sadat succeeded in involving **Syria** in his war to orchestrate an offensive against Israel across two fronts, the strategic concept that had been dreamed of since the Arab endeavours for military coalitions in 1948 and in the failed attempt to establish an Arab Military Command in1964.

The planning with the Syrians for the war occupied the year of 1973 and the secret visit of the Syrian High Command in September finalized the arrangements. Although the strategic logic of such a war on two fronts was no doubt beneficial for Egypt, its conditions and application produced negative results for both Egypt and Syria.

Syria had a more sensitive geostrategic situation. The IDF presence on the Golan Heights gave it an unprecedented defensive advantage over the Syrians who would be forced to attack upwards, making the Syrian offensive more difficult. Due to the critical importance of this front to Israel as its geographical proximity and height put the Israeli nodes of power under heavy and swift enemy air fire and armoured thrusts,[52] it was expected that the IDF would concentrate its major efforts to the Northern front unless it faced a continuous and serious pressure from the Southern front, since the Sinai constituted a wide buffer zone for any attack.

Such a war on two fronts necessitated coordinated grand and military strategies, and even operational ones, between Egypt and Syria, which did not happen to the best extent possible. Sadat's political aims were unclear but proved to be different to those of the Syrians, which led to the long-lasting enmity between the two countries after the war. Sadat's strategic concept was a limited war in scale and aims, as will be shown, which contradicted the strategic needs of the Syrians, who required *continuous* and serious pressure from the South until the Golan could be secured.

Egypt's covert strategic concept was served militarily by plans to establish a stable bridgehead (of some 10-12 km) on the east bank of the Suez Canal protected by air defence, and the army would not be allowed to move further unless aerial and armoured superiority, or denial, had been secured. This concept was what the army actually trained for. However, Sadat agreed with the Syrians to advance to the Defiles (a set of narrow passes) at a point 50-70 km east of Suez, which would give the Egyptians control of the road to the Israeli border unprotected by natural obstacles. Such an advance would, if executed, keep the IDF totally mobilized in the South and leave the way clear for the Syrian advance in the North or at least to preserve its holding of the Golan.

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[52] Giora Eiland, *Defensible Borders on the Golan Heights* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, 2009)

We can now look at how this dishonest coalition policy between Sadat and Syria, which at the least could be characterised as confused, affected the war strategy and outcome for both, especially for the Egyptians.

Sadat was under direct pressure from Syria after 8 October 1973 to extend his offensive to the Defiles which was the mission that the army was not prepared for. He was reluctant in the beginning, but when the Syrian front deteriorated on 10 and 11 October he ordered the army to move on 12 or 13 October but it only did so on the 14th.

When the Egyptians commenced their offensive on the 14th, the Syrian front was already quiet as three Iraqi armoured divisions defended the road to Damascus and the IDF was content with its achievement in retaining most of the Golan.[53]

Although the Syrian secret appeal for a cease-fire would not affect the Egyptian achievements that were already stabilized by 8 October, once it became known to Sadat it spoilt the coalition atmosphere further[54] and encouraged him to undertake unilateral and secret initiatives during and after the war.

Regionally, Sadat succeeded in catalysing the first effective example of Arab countries working collectively towards a unified cause. This Arab strategy was based on three pillars: a war of oil to pressure the US and other supporters of Israel, orchestrating Arab diplomatic pressure in the UN and globally, and military efforts of states outside the confrontation zone.

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[53] Shazly, *The Crossing*, p.317.

[54] The Soviet ambassador in Cairo told Sadat that Syria informed the USSR on 4th October that war would erupt on the 6th and that the USSR should press for a ceasefire 48 hours later to secure Syrian achievements. See: Sadat, *Search for Identity,* p.252.

The first pillar succeeded in co-ordinating an oil production boycott despite the existence of parochial economic interests and different oil production policies.[55] The unified Arab diplomatic efforts were also successful. The military efforts consisted of financial support for weaponry, especially from the Gulf States and Algeria, hardware such as the Saudis Lightning fighters serving on the Egyptian front as well as some Iraqi Hawker Hunters in Egypt and Syria, and forces (Kuwaiti and Palestinian battalions and Algerian and Libyan brigades) although these were merely symbolic presences on the Egyptian front and were more effective on the Syrian.[56]

Sadat's grand strategy for war was simple. He aimed to use **a limited war and hold a piece of land east of the Canal to launch an advantageous diplomatic negotiation** through which he could regain Sinai, at least. As Israel thought that occupying territory was the basis of her security and a means of preventing war, launching this war would push her to comply with diplomatic moves. Hence, he called this war "the spark".[57]

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[55] The burden was heavy on Western European countries that were totally dependent on Arab oil, and lighter on the US as Arab oil only represented 8% of its consumption. See Mathew Ferraro, *Tough Going, Anglo-American Relations and the Yom Kippur War*. Early in 1973, King Feisal of Saudi Arabia delivered a warning to ARAMCO's partners (Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, and Texaco) about Sadat's intentions to use oil as a "political weapon". This warning caused these companies to increase production as a hedge against an embargo. Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, *The Global Political Economy of Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2002) p.234.

[56] Detailed accounts on the Arabs' military contribution to the Egyptian front and elsewhere can be found in Shazly, *The Crossing*, as he was the Chief of Staff for the military committee of the Arab League.

[57] Sadat's interview with the Lebanese newspaper Al-Nahar, 29 March 1974, the Egyptian Akhbar Al-Yom, 3 April 1974 and his speech on Cairo radio, 18 April 1974.

It remains unclear and contested what longer term post-war conditions Sadat aimed for, to get the Sinai back only, or to liberate all Arab territories occupied in 1967, and what strategic logic or effect he aimed to achieve, other than coercing Israel into diplomacy. It is striking that these issues had never been clearly delineated or agreed upon by the Egyptian civil and military leaderships.

Military strategy

Sadat ordered the military to prepare for war with the weaponry they possessed at the time. As Israel held air and armoured supremacy, a decisive military victory or securing the whole of Sinai in one step was obviously ruled out. However, a new strategic concept evolved backed by a rationale starting with operational analysis and ending with strategic assumption.

Operationally, Egyptian forces were not able to win armoured battles given the Israeli air supremacy and the IDF's edge in armoured weaponry, doctrine and tactics.[58] Also, the Egyptians were not able to match the Israeli ability to launch air campaigns in depth using either long range bombers or surface to surface missiles.

Strategically, due to operational limitations, decisive military victory would not be attainable. Even a "limited war" option to bleed Israel over the long term had been tried with limited success in the War of Attrition as Egypt could not sustain the required coercion on Israel while avoiding attacks deep into its own territory.

Instead, the Egyptian Army would launch *a limited offensive,* but on a much wider scale than the War of Attrition and involving crossing and holding a strip of territory east of the Canal, covered by an air-denial umbrella of SAM missiles. It was proposed that if the crossing forces quickly moved to static defence by establishing and consolidating bridgeheads, armoured mobile battles (which the Egyptians would probably lose) would become unnecessary. In fact, by using their anti-armoured capabilities in bridgeheads and with an air defence umbrella, the Egyptians hoped that the expected Israeli counter-offensives would be very costly in air and armour - the main Israeli strength.

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[58] Field Marshal Ahmed Ismail indicated four Israeli advantages in his interview with Heikal: "air superiority, technological capability, rigorous training and the assured supply of weapons by the USA". Al-Ahram, 18 November 1973.

Strategically also, these costs adding to the actual military achievement of the crossing, and the *psychological* shattering of the Israeli leadership due to the widespread feeling of insecurity, especially after the previous sense of invincibility, would force Israel to engage with the diplomatic process and even be at a disadvantage within it.

This strategy was called by Asher "**all-out war of limited dimension**",[59] which was a good description, albeit questionable in part. 1973 was neither a total war in Erich Ludendorff's pattern.[60] Despite the full mobilization of all resources, it aimed for a limited military victory to precipitate a diplomatic process for achieving limited political aims, and it did not obscure the line between combatants and non-combatants. It was neither an attrition (bleeding) strategy, which does not aim for an advantageous operational end-state, either territorial or force related, to be transferred to the negotiation table as in the 1973 War, but only to bleed the enemy and make him revise his calculation, without achieving lasting operational advantage.

A matured version of Sadat's strategy was expressed in retrospect in Gamasy's memoirs, when he analysed what "the strategic directive" issued by Sadat on 5 October 1973 meant about using the limited offensive in order to "*smash the Israeli security concept*". The concept, as explained by the Egyptian Military Intelligence analysis,[61] was built upon a chain of parameters at different levels which are inter-connected and interdependent. Israel saw the IDF as its main security tool and thought retaining the occupied territories would enhance its security. So she turned down all diplomatic initiatives, apart from the immediate element in Rogers' plan, which might involve giving up territory. The IDF depends on air and armoured supremacy and was sensitive to casualties.

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[59] Dani Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy,* p.10.

[60] Jehuda Wallach, "Clausewitz, Ludendorff and Beck: Some Remarks on Clausewitz' influence on German Military Thinking in the 1930s and 1940s" in Michael Handel*, Clausewitz and Modern Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 2004) pp.213-240.

[61] Jehuda Wallach, "Clausewitz, Ludendorff and Beck", pp.57-62.

As Sadat explained in a speech in September 1974, "when we planned the war and defined its objectives, we assumed that the number of kilometres of the occupied land [that we recaptured] was not as important to us as crossing the Canal and seizing the Bar-Lev line"; he defined the main aim as "to smash the Israeli security concept: dealing with the Israeli security doctrine and destroying it".[62]

The Egyptian ***strategic concept*** for the 1973 War represented the essence of strategic logic; it aimed to modify the Israeli political will to accept a diplomatic solution favouring the Egyptian war aims. This could be done by making her feel insecure with great losses and losing confidence in the IDF's pre-eminence.

General Sadeq, the War Minister whom Sadat fired in October 1972, criticized Sadat's proposal from two aspects, and favoured waiting till the ability for a war with total aims was secured. If the Egyptian Army failed in its operational objective, or in defeating the Israeli counter-attacks, grave operational and strategic outcomes would follow. Also, it would leave the final outcome in the hands of diplomatic machinery and Superpower politics.[63]

The first reservation was subject to how the operational capability for a limited offensive would be assessed and whether Egypt could employ strategic and operational solutions to work around its disadvantageous fighting ability especially in air and armoured warfare. These measures included: the air-denial curtain of air defence, the anti-armoured belt, the strategic and operational surprise, and the natural strength of the Egyptian army in defence.

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[62] The English translation is from Asher's "*The Egyptian Strategy*", and the same meaning was delivered by Field Marshal Ismail in an interview with Heikal in the Lebanese newspaper Al-Nahar, on 18th November 1973. Both Shazly and Gamasy agreed.

[63] Sadeq's proposal was mentioned in Gamasy (p.112)and Shazly's memoirs (pp.134-140).

The second reservation was also flawed. Superpower dynamics were no doubt inevitable in the bipolar world where lines of procurement and regional balance of power were monopolies of the US or the USSR. However with these dynamics, only wars with limited aims were permitted, even if the capability existed for wider offensives.

With a war of limited aims, the strategic effect of modifying the will of the enemy is the best that is aimed for, and then diplomacy has to follow. The real reservation that Sadeq should have raised instead, if he could have predicted the future, was how stable and clear Sadat's strategic guidance would be in preserving the advantageous operational position on one side, and allowing a sound *bridging* of this operational outcome to a competent diplomatic pathway on the other.

On the other hand, why was Sadat's strategy for limited war more effective than **a strategy of attrition**?

After Rogers' initiative, which the Egyptians used by spending its interim period to optimize their air-defence curtain and move it forward, the option of limited war became once more possible as this umbrella would weaken the retaliatory strategy of the IDF to a large extent. Also, Egypt started to get Frogs and a few Scud missiles from 1972, and TU-22 bombers in 1973 to optimize its long-range conventional deterrence. So, both options were operationally feasible, but the difference was in the strategic utility of each.

Both aimed to bleed Israel and to resolve or shift the regional deadlock, but Sadat's option on top of that promised a territorial gain, even if only a symbolic one.

No discussion was recorded regarding the preference of one option over another. As Lieberman indicated, although the formal Egyptian history of the war acknowledged the shift of Sadat's strategy to the more limited option, it neither gives a clear indication of the strategic thinking cascade that led to this new strategy or why it was preferred over attrition.[64]Sadat moved smoothly from one option to another without explicit explanation.

Lieberman did not provide any explanation for the preference of "all-out limited war" over "attrition war" apart from indicating the failed outcome of the attrition strategy before in 1970 and the fear of extensive Israeli retaliation.[65] However, the situation regarding capabilities and limitations to withstand the Israeli response was changed by the strengthening of Egypt's air-defence umbrella and the arrival, albeit in small quantities and at a slow pace, of surface-to-surface missiles and a few long range bombers.

Sadat himself did not rule out completely far less limited options than his 1973 strategy. At the end of 1972, he envisioned a wide scale commando operation at Sharm el Sheikh. However in April 1973, he sanctioned the extended plan of a wide scale crossing and holding a bridgehead.[66] Three possible reasons might have convinced him to make this shift and he explicitly mentioned them, albeit in different contexts.

Firstly, such an operation would enable him to have a *solid territorial gain* (even a few centimetres as he illustrated) east of Suez which would be helpful to symbolize the Egyptian achievement politically and might constitute a base for future operations if needed.

Second, there was a necessity to *restore the injured honour* of the Egyptian Army and the people in general by a big and challenging operation in which Egyptian soldiers would confront and overcome the Israelis.

Third, the *psychologically shattering effect* on the Israeli leadership of both smashing the parameters of its security concept and suddenly ending the post-1967 euphoria and sense of invincibility, in addition to high losses, would affect the Israeli calculations dramatically and impose a feeling of insecurity and lack of trust in victory. This psychological effect turned out to be huge to the extent that the Israeli leadership lost control for the first few days and even Dayan proposed a full or partial withdrawal from Sinai to more defendable positions.[67]

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[64] Hassan Al-Badry, Taha Al-Magdoub, Dia Al Din Zuhdi, *The Ramadan War: 1973* (Boulder Colorado: The Westview Press, 1978).

[65] Lieberman, *Reconceptualising Deterrence*, p.156.

[66] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy of Yom Kippur*, p.241.

However, in spite of the excellence in setting the strategic concept for the 1973 war, practical deficits existed which resulted largely from conceptual and institutional problems.

The deficits were: the political aims and scope were less than clear, as was the question of how the war was to be used to achieve the liberating agenda over the long term, and the disharmony between military and non-military means in practice.

In addition, the strategic concept was not equally clear to members of the political-military leadership.

Hence, these weak points manifested themselves at the crucial junctures of the war when a full grasp of the strategic formula was needed. As a result, the real time application of the strategic concept and its adaptation to events was dysfunctional, as will be shown below. Even at the military planning stage this logic was not clear enough to guide the discussion before and during the war.

The plan

Sadat claimed in his memoirs that Nasser died without leaving any form of offensive plans.[68] Nevertheless, the Egyptian army had provisional planning ideas which were guided by General Abdul-Mone'em Riadh who had been killed by an artillery barrage in 1969.

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[67] Chaim Herzog, *The War of Atonement* (London: Greenhill Books, 2006); *Martin Van Creveld, The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defence* Force (New York: Public Affairs Books, 1998) p.243.

[68] Sadat, *In Search of Identity,* pp.235-236.

The general plan for this offensive was called Plan 200 and the troops undertook two war games based on its principles in 1968 and 1969. General Fawzy and Heikal, in contrast to Sadat, said that this plan, and the detailed plans for armies and services, was offered to Nasser in September 1970 when Fawzy thought it had become applicable, and he agreed verbally for it to be executed in the spring of 1971, but Nasser's sudden death halted this and Sadat subsequently rejected it. Plan 200 envisioned three steps: the crossing of five infantry divisions at night time to destroy the Bar-Lev Line and build bridgeheads, then two armoured and three mechanized divisions would thrust to the passes in the middle of Sinai, and reach the Israeli border in 10-12 days.[69]

All accounts of the pre-war period, even Sadat's, agreed on the existence of Plan 200. However, they differ on whether it was a defensive plan, as Sadat and Shazly claimed, or offensive as Fawzy and Gamal Hammad claimed. Hammad doubted its applicability and said, "General Fawzy freed Sinai only on the map".[70] If the Egyptian Army after three years of training, sophisticated planning, intelligence work-ups and strategic surprise, receiving new hardware -- especially tanks and fighters, maturing the doctrine and inventing solutions to major tactical problems could only complete the first step of Plan 200, it is unlikely that it could have been fully implemented two years earlier.

The first step of Plan 200 was renamed Granite 1 in 1971 and, after maturing its details and assumptions, was called Granite 2,[71]which became the basis of the plan of 1973.

Shazly indicated that another plan (*High Minarets*) was formulated to involve only the crossing and building five divisional bridgeheads which would be amalgamated into two army bridgeheads 10-12 km east of the Canal to be under the air-defence umbrella which was mostly static (SAM 3) with a smaller number of SAM 6 (around 12 batteries).[72] This operation would be preceded by a series of disrupting short air strikes at the operational and command centres in Sinai, and included naval littoral operations.

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[69] Fawzy, *The October War*, pp.27-45; Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*; Gamal Hammad, *The Military Operations at the Egyptian Front*, (Cairo: Dar el Shorouk, 2002, Arabic), pp.30-33.

[70] Hammad, *The Military Operations at the Egyptian Front*, p.47.

[71] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy, pp.78-86*

Operation Badr; the formal plan of the war that was agreed upon with the Syrians, is the modified Granite 2 (where the advance proceeds to the Sinai Passes), and its first stage would be the crossing and bridgeheads (High Minaret). It contained also plans for special operations east of the Passes to delay the Israeli counter-offensive until the bridgeheads could be formed and the second echelon of the Egyptian Army (armoured and mechanised divisions) would cross to form the operational spearhead for the Passes. The operation set an interim turning point between its first and second stages as an *operational pause*. (Map 1)[73]

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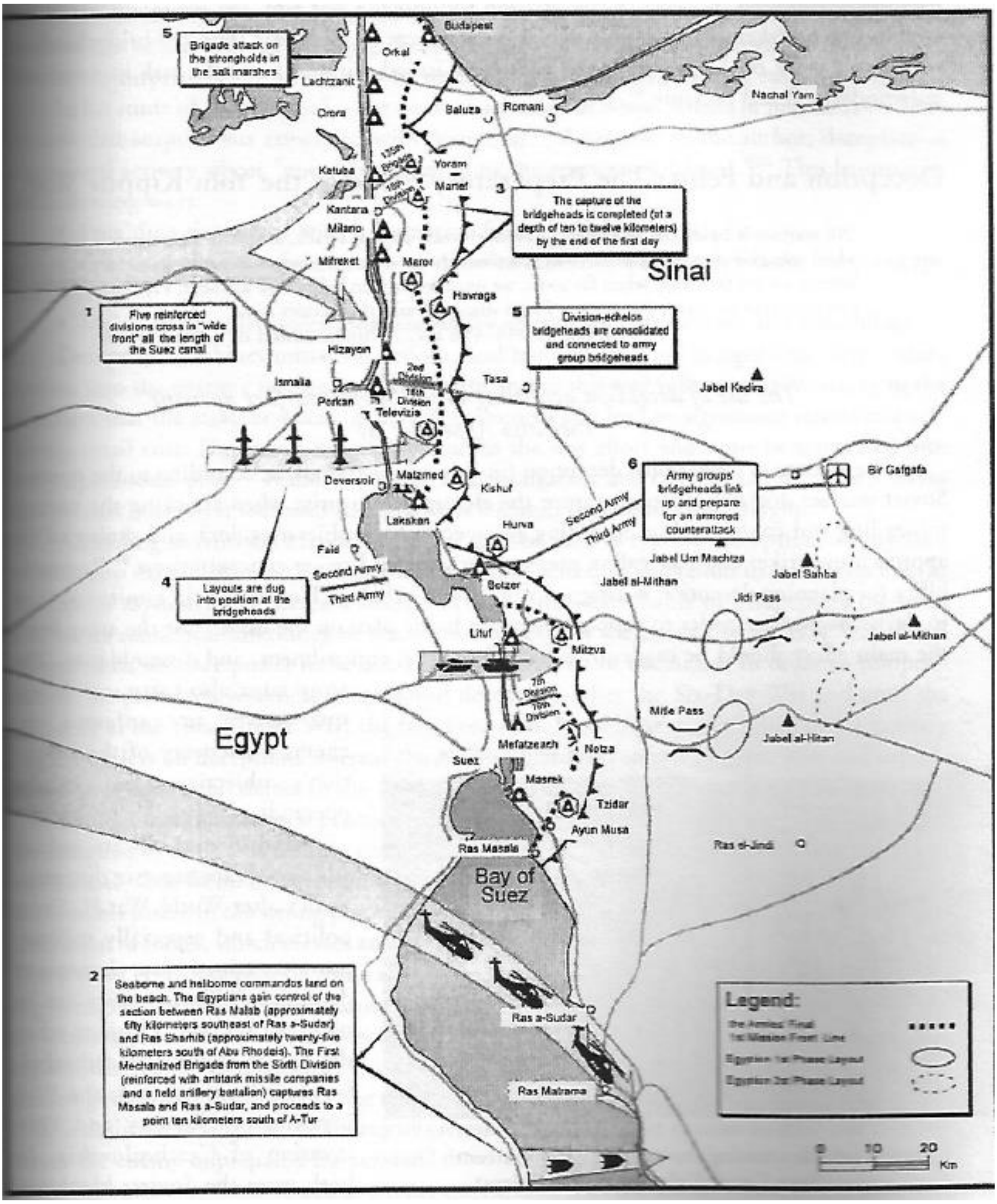
[72] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.27-39.

[73] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, p. 89.


5
Brigade attack on the strongholds in the salt marshes
Budapest
Orkal
Lachtzanit
Orora
Baluza
Romani
Nachal Yam
Ketuba
135th Brigade
18th Division
Yoram
Mariel
Kantara
Milano
Mifreket
Maror
3
The capture of the bridgeheads is completed (at a depth of ten to twelve kilometers) by the end of the first day
Sinai
Havraga
1
Five reinforced divisions cross in "wide front" all the length of the Suez canal
5
Division-echelon bridgeheads are consolidated and connected to army group bridgeheads
Hizayon
2nd Division
16th Division
Ismailia
Purkan
Televizia
Tasa
Jabel Kedira
Deversoir
Matzmed
Kishuf
6
Army groups' bridgeheads link up and prepare for an armored counterattack
Bir Gafgafa
Laksan
Hurva
Second Army
Third Army
Faid
Jabel Um Machtza
Jabel Sahba
Jabel al-Mithan
4
Layouts are dug into position at the bridgeheads
Botzer
Jidi Pass
Lituf
Mitzva
Jabel al-Mithan
7th Division
19th Division
Mitle Pass
Jabel al-Hitan
Egypt
Mefatzeach
Notza
Suez
Masrek
Tzidar
Ayun Musa
Ras Masala
Ras el-Jindi
Bay of Suez
2
Seaborne and heliborne commandos land on the beach. The Egyptians gain control of the section between Ras Malab (approximately fifty kilometers southeast of Ras a-Sudar) and Ras Sharhib (approximately twenty-five kilometers south of Abu Rhodeis). The First Mechanized Brigade from the Sixth Division (reinforced with antitank missile companies and a field artillery battalion) captures Ras Masala and Ras a-Sudar, and proceeds to a point ten kilometers south of A-Tur
Ras a-Sudar
Ras Matrama
Legend:
the Armies' Final 1st Mission Front Line
Egyptian 1st Phase Layout
Egyptian 2nd Phase Layout
0
10
20
Km

Egyptian Operational Plan[74]

There was a central ambiguity in the plan of the Badr Operation which challenged the strategic concept of the war, and gravely affected its strategy and outcome. The question arises whether the second step of the plan was ever meant by Egyptian leadership to be implemented, or represented an option in the event of an Israeli breakdown in Sinai, or was only a ruse to entice the Syrians to enter the war. This raises the question of what Egyptians meant by the operational pause and how was it strategically significant.

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[74] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, p.89.

The operational pause is a term borrowed from Soviet doctrine and practice in WWII. As the invading armoured divisions penetrate deep in the enemy territories they get closer to the culminating point of offence -- exhausting forces and over-extending logistics. Therefore, they should stop the thrust until other echelons join with reinforcements and support. It may also be used to describe the mutual fighting inertia at the front.[75]

American military doctrines used the term in a similar way to mean stopping an offensive before its culminating point for further logistical and intelligence preparations for sequential moves. John Cohn offered another application of the concept as a "war termination tool" in order to press the enemy for negotiation. For this to work it needed some pre-conditions in place: gaining a strategic negotiating card, not letting the enemy build his strength, and retaining full self-protection operationally against any counter-offensive.[76]

Within all definitions, this concept is **not** applicable at the peak of an offensive when the second echelon prepares itself for striking deep into the enemy's operational base. Hence, the term was used inaccurately in the war plan if it really aimed to build another thrust as Granite 2 explicitly stated. In this case, exploitation of the advantage of the crossing by the second echelon would be what the Soviet doctrine necessitates rather than spending the time in consolidating the bridgehead.

Also, if the pause was to be used politically, as Cohen indicated, none of the pre-conditions were applied; negotiations were abandoned by Sadat at this stage as he refused the British proposals for a cease-fire,[77] a time lag was given to the IDF to recover, and protection was defective as both bridgeheads consolidated their base but left a gap in between. He literally missed the point where his outstanding operational success could be transformed into an advantageous position at the negotiating table.

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[75] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy,* pp.144-150.

[76] John Cohn, *The Role of Operational Pause in War Termination* (Newport, Rhodes Island: Naval War College, 1994).

In a further indication of this strategic confusion, the conditions for ending the operational pause were interpreted differently by the Egyptian commanders. Shazly saw as being almost between two separate wars and understood that the pause should continue even for years until massive developments in forces and equipment, even on a regional scale, could occur to enable the defeat of Israel.[78] Gamasy, however, understood it as a very short pause until the maturation of the bridgeheads and the crossing of the second echelon were achieved, so he was very critical of the delay of the thrust to the Passes, but his suggestion was turned down by both Ismail and Shazly due to Israeli air supremacy and the limitation of the Egyptian air defence.[79]

With the two higher commanders not seeing the second stage as feasible in the short term, did the Egyptian leadership conceive the plan as two consecutive stages in the same war? Or was it the case, as Shazly claimed, that the **second stage formally was merely an option, and in reality it was a means for securing Syrian involvement in the war that Sadat later ordered to go ahead, in a clumsy way, under pressure from his ally?**

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[77] The British approached Sadat twice for a ceasefire. The first was on 7 October but it was too early, before repulsing the Israeli counteroffensive on the 8th. (Cairo: Adams to Foreign Commonwealth Office, 1300z, 7 October 1973, FCO 93/254, National Archives – UK).

The second was on October 12, at Kissinger's request for he became very doubtful of the Israeli potential performance in Sinai but very pleased with its achievement in Syria. This second request was also rejected by Sadat. (Bridges to the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Massage #6, No 10 to Blackpool, 12 October 1973, PREM 15/1765. National Archives –UK).

[78] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.17-20.

[79] Gamasy, *The October War*, pp.282-284.

Gamasy, Heikal, and the formal Egyptian, Syrian and Israeli military historians support the first interpretation for different reasons, but Shazly, Asher and Pollack support the second. Shazly clearly stated, and all the evidence supports him, that no detailed planning, training or orders of battle were made in advance for the implementation of the second step.

Also, if we accept the authenticity of the second stage, Egypt's war plan would be in contradiction to the strategic war concept that aimed to bridge the operational capability and limitations with the strategic effect required. This concept aimed to weaken or at least bypass the Israeli operational superiority (in air and armour) in order to reach a solid operational objective. Israeli air supremacy would be confronted by air defence and the protected Egyptian ground advances under it. Israeli advantage in mobile armoured battles would be met with by different layers of anti-armour, and the shifting of Egyptian forces quickly to consolidated defence after crossing the Canal.[80]

Shazly was right when he stressed that moving beyond the air-defence curtain was outside this logic and operationally damaging. But what was not mentioned by him is that the Egyptian army was even far inferior to its opponent in armoured manoeuvring operations, in weapons, doctrine, training and tactical leadership, and was only able to work to a pre-existing plan. Pollack made a sharp contrast between the very delicate planning and training of the Egyptian army for the first part of operations in comparison to the clumsy and hurried planning, and execution, with no training for the second.[81]

Asher also emphasised this point, and his research on the military orders of battle and planning documents of the war found hardly any indication of a concrete intention to extend the offensive. For example, his research shows the delay in transferring the second echelon armour, the cancelling of the disrupting Special Operations in the middle of Sinai and he reveals the *modus operandi* that the operation of 14 October followed as hesitating, harassing moves and at a brigade level from four sectors.[82] (Map 2)[83]

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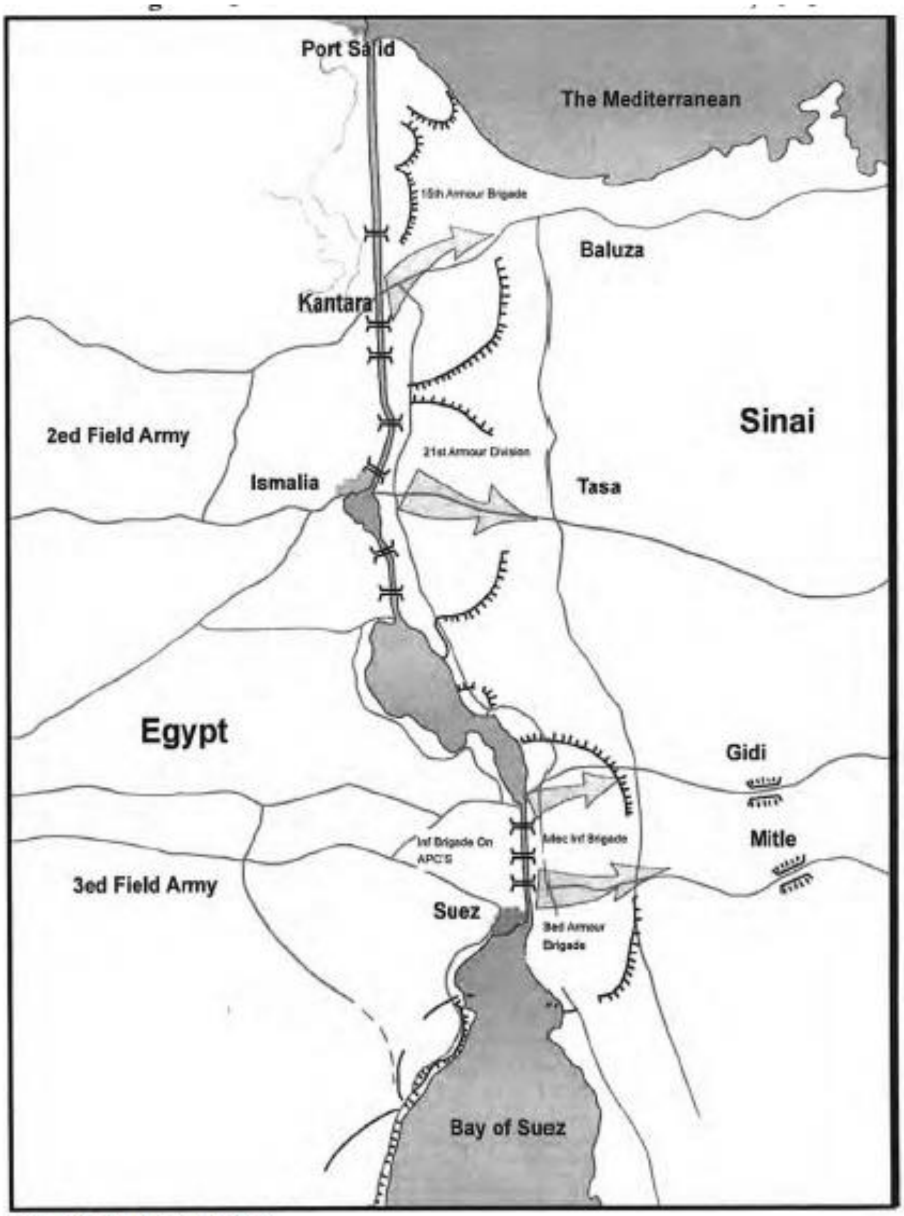
[80] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.27-39.

[81] Pollack, *Arabs at War*, p.128.


Port Said
The Mediterranean
15th Armour Brigade
Baluza
Kantara
Sinai
2ed Field Army
21st Armour Division
Ismalia
Tasa
Egypt
Gidi
Inf Brigade On APC'S
Mec Inf Brigade
Mitle
3ed Field Army
Suez
3ed Armour Brigade
Bay of Suez

(From Jamal Hamad's Book)

Gamasy claimed that if the second stage had been initiated as early as 9 October it would have been operationally applicable and strategically fruitful. He indicated to Ismail on that day that the Israeli air supremacy could be confronted by certain measures: the mobile SAM-6 and portable Sam-7, attacking at night, and that the collision between the two armies would lessen the impact of air strikes. Shazly offered a counter-argument that the mobile SAM-6 batteries were few in number and not sufficient to provide a cover, and the collision between forces would only occur after travelling 45 km through the open desert.[84]

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[82] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy*, pp.150-153.

[83] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy*, p.152.

This researcher would argue that Gamasy's proposal might be applicable as a daring high-risk operation to exploit the chaotic atmosphere inside the Israeli strategic and operational leaderships and formations, especially if the forces advanced at night and if the movement of air defence/artillery formations and the second echelons had occurred earlier. However, two unsolvable obstacles remain.

Firstly, Egypt did not have enough forces to complete the task and at the same time keep her strategic defence in place to defend in depth against any Israeli attempt to break through the forward static defence, a move which had always been foreseen by the Egyptian leadership before the war.

Second, as the operation of 14 October showed, the real enemy of the advancing forces was not air power; it was the bad organisational planning and command, and the limited capability to launch a large scale mobile armoured offensive. In truth, the Egyptian army did not have the requirements for such operations, either in doctrine, training or tactical command abilities.[85]

Adapting Strategy

Crossing and Sustaining the Israeli Counter-offensive (*6– 13 October 1973*)

Up to 14 October, the Egyptian war performance was very effective and in accordance with the operational plans and had a better than expected outcome. The operations achieved their primary and secondary military objectives -- the crossing itself and the consolidation of the bridgeheads. The Egyptians succeeded also in repulsing the Israeli counter-offensive on the 8th, and inflicted unprecedented losses on the IDF in terms of personnel, hardware and confidence with fewer Egyptian losses.[86] The crossing operation, for example, despite its complexity at the tactical and operational levels, left around 280 Egyptian casualties in comparison to the pre-war estimation of up to 10,000.[87]

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[84] Gamasy, *The October War,* pp.382-392.

[85] The 21st Brigade was decimated on the 13th of October, when it was sent to the South by mistake outside the air-defence curtain.

On 6 October 1973, the war was launched at 2.00 pm with short air strikes on the Israeli command and communications centres in the western and middle Sinai. Then bombardment commenced which followed the pattern of interlocking firing. Under this cover waves of Egyptian commandos and infantry crossed the Canal and stabilized a foothold on the eastern bank, benefiting from combined arms, air defence, anti-armour and artillery. Dealing with the IDF strongholds was delayed until the first Egyptian operational echelon (five infantry divisions each reinforced by an armoured brigade) overwhelmed the Israeli first echelon reserves.

On the same day the Bab Al-Mandab strait in the opening of the Red Sea was blocked efficiently against Israeli shipping by two Egyptian destroyers that had been sent to Aden and were given a sealed envelope including the orders for their mission to be opened only a short period before the outbreak of the war so as not to give an early warning to Israel. [88]

All Bar-Lev strongholds were seized at a later stage, most after being encircled from behind. Then the second stage of operations, the final operational objective, commenced which was creating and fortifying the bridgeheads. It started by forming a bridgehead for each infantry division, then for the two field armies. The second army was responsible for the north of Sinai, and the third army was responsible for the south, and were bisected at Defressoir.

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[86] The general estimates of losses in the Egyptian front were: 470 personnel, 500 tanks (200 on the 6-7th of October and 300 on the 8th) in addition to more than 70 fighter aircrafts. (Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p.492; Trevor Dupuy, *The Elusive Victory: the Arab Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (Fairfax, VA: Hero, 1984),p.609.

[87] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.232-235.

[88] Except for the Budapest stronghold facing Port Fouad located on the sea and salt basins facing two directions.

The stability and resilience of the strongholds were crucial for the strategic plan. First, this was a solidified territorial achievement as a condition for an advantage in a future diplomatic process. Second, it represented the pillar of the defensive layout in front of the expected Israeli counter-offensives aiming not only to expel the Egyptians from the eastern Bank, but to counter-cross. If this happened it would upset the strategic balance in any diplomatic process. Third, strong bridgeheads would force the Israelis to launch offensives in vain and incur more losses as the IDF did on the 8 October when three armoured divisions experienced significant casualties. As air/armoured supremacy and sensitivity to human losses were basic layers of Israel's security concept, it would be severely challenged as the Egyptians expected.

Sadat refused peremptorily proposals as early as 7 October and also on 12 October for a cease-fire and he reiterated his determination to continue the war until the Israelis agreed to a withdrawal from the Sinai and to participate in peace negotiations.[89] He commenced communication with the US on 7 October with a letter to Kissinger explaining the Egyptian point of view, that the conflict could be solved by comprehensive agreement which would include an Israeli withdrawal, free passage through Tiran and Suez, which could be supervised temporarily by the UN, and searching for a just solution for the Palestinians. However, he also assured Kissinger that Egypt would not "deepen or extend the scale of operations".[90] Although Sadat's Adviser for National Security attempted to advocate this by clarifying that Sadat meant that the Egyptians did not intend to attack Israeli civilian centres, what Kissinger clearly understood from this sentence was that the Egyptians would stay on the defensive and would not rush to the Passes as Israel expected.[91]This was a grave mistake strategically as it gave Israel breathing space to focus on the Syrian front after the failure of its counter-offensive of the 8th in Sinai.

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[89] He informed the British Ambassador on 7 October his refusal of any premature ceasefire until his war objectives were achieved. (Cairo -Adams to FCO, 1300z, 7October 1973, FCO 93/254, National Archives – UK). The second occasion was when the British, at Kissinger's request because Israel was performing highly on the Syrian front, explored the Egyptian response to the British proposal for a ceasefire. Again, Sadat's answer was a big No. "Bridges to the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Message #6, No 10 to Blackpool, 12 October 1973, PREM 15/1765. National Archives –UK".

[90] Hafiz Ismail, *Egyptian National Security,* pp.317-319 ; Kissinger, *The Years of Upheaval,* p.482.

The situation in Syria was extremely serious as Israel started to attack economic and military infrastructures on 9 October, and Damascus on the 10th. On the same day, the IDF broke through the Syrian formations in the northern Golan and threatened Damascus on 11 October. Iraq committed an armoured division to the Syrian front which arrived on the 12th together with a Jordanian armoured brigade, and the situation stabilized.

The American diplomatic strategy contained three elements, as Kissinger later explained: supporting the position of Israel by half-hearted cease-fire initiatives to convince the Egyptians to halt their progress; trying to postpone the cease-fire to give Israel a window to restore the situation or to achieve a military advantage at least on one front; and convincing Jordan not to comply with Arab pressure to go to war or to permit the stationing of Arab forces on its territory even if Hussein had to send a brigade to Syria in response to that regional pressure.[92]

Under Syrian pressure on the 11th, Sadat ordered his command to resume the thrust by racing to the Passes; the next step laid out in the formal plan of war. The decision was taken to launch the offensives on the 13th and then was postponed to 14th October.

Sadat's strategy at this stage of the war was mixed. On the one hand he used military developments strategically to the maximum benefit by refusing the initial cease-fire proposals in order to increase the feeling of Israeli insecurity and fear of further Egyptian offensives. On the other hand, he reassured the Americans regarding his ultimate intentions. The way that he dealt with the American directly, ignoring the Soviets and emphasising that any international proposal should be directed to him and not to Moscow, were the early signs of his reoriented policy/grand strategic preference.

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[91] Kissinger, *The Years of Upheaval,* p.482.

[92] Kissinger, *The Years of Upheaval,* p.482.

Ultimately, he believed that the US was the only power with the capacity to push Israel into diplomatic concessions and was convinced of the need to re-orientate Egypt towards the United States. He did not acknowledge, however, that a diplomatic process sponsored by the US would not be even-handed, as would be demonstrated by Kissinger's attitude both at this stage of the war and thereafter.

Breakthrough and Aftermath (*14 – 25 October 1973*)

Things began to go badly for Egypt on 14 October when the price for the weak points in Egyptian policy/strategy had to be paid. Although the Syrian front had become fairly quiet by 13 October, Sadat ordered the military to mount an offensive, with explicit objections only from Shazly.

Shazly maintained that the plan the army had trained for and was capable of implementing had, as explained above, already been achieved. Any further offensive now outside the air-defence umbrella would, he argued, be catastrophic. One event emphasised Shazly's point when Brigade 21 faced a shattering air strike on the 13th when it was given a mistaken order to move south.

Although Gamasy supported the proposed offensive, he grossly denied its operational applicability on 14 October since the operational tempo had been lost and the IDF had recovered from its initial paralysis and was enhancing its defensive layout.[93] Hafez Assad, the Syrian President, and Heikal also shared Gamasy's estimate in retrospect.[94]

The poor and hesitant modus operandi of the Egyptian offensive on the 14th left more than 400 tanks lost. Division 21, the main armoured reserve of the second army, and one brigade of the Fourth Division, the armoured reserve of the third army, specifically were wrecked. The Egyptian public narrative claimed that an American R-71 was recorded flying beyond the Egyptian air-defences reaches on the 13th and that this plane detected the movement of Division 21 and conveyed the news to the IDF.[95]

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[93] Gamasy, *The October War*, p.385

[94] Ismail Fahmy, *Negotiation for Peace in the Middle East*, Cairo: Dar Ashorouk 2005, Arabic). Heikal, *October: Arms and Politics*.

In any case, this information would not have made much difference as the Israelis were expecting, and indeed hoping, for the Egyptian defences to weaken after their offensive had been repulsed and delayed their counter-offensive until after breaking the offensive, as will be shown.

On the night of the 15/16 October, Sharon's and Dan's divisions commenced the breakthrough, in which the second division would move down the western bank at the third army sector, and the first division would form and maintain a corridor for a counter-crossing. Despite the bloodiest fighting in the war (what became known as the "Chinese Farm Battle") the Egyptian 16th Division was pushed back and Sharon was able to send a battalion of tanks to the western front. The first task was to attack as many SAM sites as possible. On the 17th-21st, three Israeli divisions were transferred, including most of Magan's division apart from the corridor guardian forces, while Sharon's raced north towards Ismailia, and Dan and Magan's forces moved west and south towards Suez and the Suez-Cairo main road.

Only on the 17th did the Egyptians realize how severe the situation was and discussed within the military high command the best option in response. There were two options: either to try to close the corridor from the east or to withdraw their armoured brigades from the east to destroy the Israeli forces in the west. Ismail, under the direction of Sadat, supported the first, and Shazly supported the second. Sadat and Ismail were obsessively against any "withdrawal" of the Egyptian forces from the east bank.

Shazly tried hard to explain that almost two divisions in the west could not be contained by half of the 4th armoured division and a paratrooper brigade given the quality of the Israeli armoured forces and the gaps in the air defence umbrella which permitted IAF air tactical support. He stressed the force imbalance in the Egyptian layout on the two banks; seven armoured brigades and five infantry divisions in the east facing only three armoured Israeli brigades, and a completely opposite picture in the west.

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[95] Gamasy, *The October War*, p.401.

Lastly, he explained how a horizontal counter-offensive from the east aiming to close the corridor would be less effective than from the west. However, the nature of political-military relations made Sadat's order non-contestable and two brigades in the east were ordered to push in a pincer movement to close the gap. However, this operation ended with one brigade destroyed and the other failing to achieve its aim.

Another meeting was held on the 20th, when Shazly returned from the front and insisted on his previous proposal as the situation in the west had become significantly worse for the Egyptians. He asked Ismail to call Sadat in order to resolve the tension in the high command. When Sadat came he rejected Shazly's proposal in a harsh way and ordered that no change be made to the previous orders. The only move he took was diplomatic. He agreed to a cease-fire. [96]

The first cease-fire was sanctioned by the UN on 21 October (Resolution 338) and came into force on the 22nd. Israel formally accepted the decision, but her three divisions kept operating. A second cease-fire was sanctioned on the 22nd (Resolution 339) and had the same fate; Israel formally accepted but did not implement it. Dan's division tried to seize Suez city to attain a massive political gain, but was repulsed by the people's guerrilla resistance supported by an attachment from the 19th Division. However, he succeeded in destroying all SAM positions working in the Third Army sector and attacking all its managerial and logistical posts;[97] now the Egyptian Third Army became totally encircled from east and west with no air defence to protect it from Israeli air power. Israeli forces succeeded also in blocking the Suez-Cairo road and encircling Suez City itself.

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[96] Accounts of these meetings and their outcome can be found in Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.265-268; Gamasy, *The October War*, pp.419-421.

[97] Abraham Adan, *On the Banks of Suez: An Israeli General's Personal Account of The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Presido Press, 1980), pp.346-350.

On the 25 October, the UN proposed a third cease-fire (Resolution 340) to be enforced by UN Emergency Forces. The mutual atrocities stopped on 28 October. By that time Sadat had ordered three armoured brigades to move west which made the force weight more balanced with that of the Israelis, and plan "Shamel" was forged to deal with the Israeli pocket but was never implemented.[98] Three SCUD missiles were launched on the pocket a few minutes before the cease-fire as a symbolic gesture.[99]

Disengagement (25 October 1973 – January 1974)

This ending led to UN-supported military negotiations in order to apply the cease-fire and disengage forces. This was known as the "100 km negotiations" but they ended without conclusion. A peace conference in Geneva also failed to reach any political or military resolution. However, Kissinger, who visited Egypt in November and December, brought about a conclusion through his piecemeal "shuttle" diplomacy. Egypt and Israel agreed on "six points" that included stabilizing the cease-fire, channelling non-military supplies to the Third army and Suez under UN supervision, negotiating disengagement, and returning POWs and bodies of Israeli KIA which was vital domestically for Meir's government.[100]

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[98] Hammad, *The Military Operations at the Egyptian Front,* pp.427-443.

[99] Karp claimed these Egyptian missiles played a role in easing the Israeli position following American pressure. Karp indicated that this was the conviction of Elazar as he referred to Cohen's Military Misfortunes. In reviewing the latter, it only mentioned Elazar in the same context of SS missiles when he discussed the "concept" of AMAN. Clearly, given the few SCUD A (RE-17) arsenals (one brigade) and its limited range and inaccuracy; it was merely a symbolic act, as was indicated by El-Shazly. Aaron Karp, *Ballistic Missile Proliferation: The Politics and Techniques* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994) p.45; Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press 1990) p. 102; El-Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* p.80.

[100] Golda Meir, *My Life* (London: Cox and Wyman Ltd, 1975) p.368.

The first Agreement of Disengagement was reached in January 1974. It stated that Israeli forces would return to Sinai with a buffer zone occupied by UN emergency forces, and only 7000 Egyptian forces and 30 tanks. SAM missiles were to be withdrawn 30 km to the west and symbolic artillery pieces were to be permitted to stay on the east bank of Sinai. For Gamasy, now COS after Shazly was fired in December 1973, it was shocking. Gamasy described, with Ismail Fahmy, the acting Foreign Minister, how Sadat interacted exclusively with Kissinger and kept both of them in the dark and then imposed the agreement on them.[101]

Sadat's strategy at this stage was **paradoxical.** On one hand he publicly underestimated the Israeli military gains and overestimated the Egyptian gains. On the other hand, he made serious concessions that even the problematic operational outcome could not justify. But, as mentioned earlier, another reason may account for these concessions (which were astonishing to both Kissinger and the Israelis) which was his bidding for a regional re-orientation with the US and his personal eagerness for a political victory, even a symbolic one.

Guiding the fighting power

The strategic guidance of fighting power in the preparations for the 1973 War by the Egyptian command was of a near excellent standard, especially if compared to 1967. It had understood what type of war it was going to fight and its strategic logic. The parameters of this strategic logic governed all layers of guiding the fighting ability. Also, the Egyptian command identified the strategic, operational and tactical obstacles in the impending war and invented, or adapted, competent solutions.

Hence, Egypt did not merely succeed in enhancing its fighting capabilities linearly in quality and quantity, or merely in counter-balancing the IDF operationally and tactically, but it did that in line with its strategic *concept* of the 1973 War.

Doctrinal

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[101] Fahmy, *Negotiation for Peace in the Middle East,* pp.90-94.

The Egyptian military did not recognise the value of writing a doctrine. While some formulae were in existence, mostly copying Soviet models, they were mostly tactical-technical and to a lesser extent operational.

However, there was an increasing Egyptian engagement with the issue of operational thinking and doctrine after 1967, and because of the operational and tactical dilemmas faced during the War of Attrition. The army was encouraged to look for solutions to these problems and to improve its professional conduct at operational and tactical levels.

Two big decisions were taken by the Egyptian strategic command.

The first was to attach the Egyptian military system strongly to the Soviets starting from 1967. This was obviously a strategic decision and was motivated by political issues. Nasser's new policy of dependence on the USSR which had been the main weaponry provider before 1967 anyway, with an accessible military educational system, meant that almost all officers above the rank of lieutenant-colonel had training/education in the USSR on tactical and operational issues.[102] The linguistic barrier was eased by massive translations into English and Arabic.

The second decision, which is more interesting here, was modifying the Soviet doctrine to suit the Egyptian theatre and strategy. Heikal indicated the wide difference in the scope of the operational theatre for which the Soviet doctrines were prepared; distances of 1000 kilometres for example in the western European front compared with Egyptian plans for the Sinai which measured only 170 by 250 km. But it was not just a matter of minimizing the geometric parameters of Soviet doctrine. As Asher showed clearly, most of the Soviet doctrinal recommendations for building tactical/operational defensive and offensive operations were modified to suit the context.[103]

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[102] Gamal Hammad, interview with Al-Jazeera channel (2008); Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.100-106.

[103] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy*, pp.105-177.

More interesting was that these modifications related to the ***strategic mission that*** included an assessment of Israeli strategic, operational and tactical strengths and weaknesses.

Dani Asher's well documented study on "The Egyptian Strategy for the Yom Kippur War" benefited from searching Egyptian military documents captured during the Israeli counter-crossing. It mainly focused on the operational level of war by linking it to Egyptian operational education and doctrine and, while tracing the roots of this doctrine in Soviet doctrine, showed how the Egyptians *adapted* it to both the theatre dimensions and peculiarities of Sinai and to the characteristics of the strategic mission in the 1973 War.

The military strategic concept in this war was that Egyptian Army would bypass the Israeli supremacy in air and armour by establishing extensive curtains of air-defences and anti-armour layers. Also, since they risked being outmanoeuvred in mobile armoured operations in the desert where the IDF was talented with armoured fists and air tactical support, Egyptian defensive/offensive operations would be pursued under the curtains with prior planning and training in minute detail and with rapid turning to defensive action.[104]

In air doctrine, while the Soviet doctrine indicated preparatory deep air operations, both interdiction to disrupt the operational reserve and strategic to attain air supremacy, Egypt's capability did not allow it to pursue this step to the end and Egyptian doctrine replaced this requirement with reliance on an extensive umbrella of SAM 2/3 supported by anti-aircraft guns, mobile SAM6 and portable SAM7 (Strella). It also aimed to shorten the operational depth to the limits of this umbrella. Dog fighting, since the bad experience of the War of Attrition when the ratio of Egyptian to Israeli losses in planes were 4-8:1, was restricted to essential missions in which planes could remain under the air-defence curtain as far as possible and operated in concentrated groups of fighters.[105]

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[104] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.63-67.

For ground forces, while the Soviet doctrine relied heavily on mobile in-depth offence and defence, and considered the offensive breakthrough by second echelon armour[106] as the "golden key" for victory and attaining operational objectives, the Egyptian doctrine, adopted another pattern, acknowledging limitations in armoured mobile warfare and considering the strategic effects that were needed at the political level (limited war with modest operational advantage).

This focused on creating stable bridgeheads and using fortified static defence anti-armoured missiles, mortars, mines, and tactical reserve tanks in a complementary fashion as the golden key for the operation. The anti-armour Egyptian defence layout was fascinating; it began with an artillery zone (4000-5000 m), then a Saggers' zone (1000-3000 m), followed by cannon and RPGs 7. These forward defensive zones were complemented by tank regiments in the second echelon of tactical formations.[107]

Naval doctrine acknowledged the vulnerability of the Egyptian navy in undertaking operations outside the air-defence umbrella, whether blockade, littoral offensive or amphibious. Hence it confined the navy's mission to littoral defence, limited naval barrages on the northern Sinai coast, a few commandos, but mainly to enforce a strategic blockade at Bab-Al Mandab which was not reachable by the IAF.

At a more tactical level, the Egyptians were very concerned with easing the tactical problems of the crossing, mainly overcoming the IDF strongholds, the dust ramp and the fire system, and they succeeded admirably in this, as failure would have cost heavily at the operational and strategic levels.

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[105] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.18-20; Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, p.33; Nader Marouf Suleiman Bakhit, *The Evolution of Egyptian Air Defence Strategy, 1967-1973* (Ph. D.) University of London, 1990).

[106] What was developed and identified later in the 1980s as the Operational Manoeuvre Group (OMG).

[107] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.230-233; Asher, *Egyptian Strategy,* pp.135-144.

Regarding the strongholds, the doctrine which was applied meticulously in practice envisioned dealing with them in three stages: silencing their intervening fire during the crossing with heavy artillery barrages supported by tanks, anti-tank weapons and tactical air support; bypassing them by choosing landing spots between them or avoiding fighting them if that could not be achieved, and taking them in later stages from behind after cutting their lines of logistic support and retreat. [108]

Regarding the dust ramp which reached 15-20 meters height at a steep angle, the Egyptians found a solution by creating up to 70 breaks in it using pressured water pumps.[109]

Regarding the fire system (*Ot Yarmoe* in Hebrew), this was a controversial issue that was generally emphasised in all Egyptian military writings and it consumed a significant part of resources and concentration in operational and tactical efforts. The Egyptians identified the openings by intelligence/surveillance and blocked them a few hours before the operation.[110]

In contrast, the formal Israeli narrative states that most of the project was not completed and was non-functioning at the time of crossing.[111] Even the Egyptian military intelligence report of September 1972 that was published in Asher's study clearly supported the Israeli claim as it indicated that only 2 stations were working.[112]

However, given the highly cautious Egyptian attitude, which may be said to have reached a degree of obsessive perfectionism in the details of the crossing, as shown in Shazly's account of the operation, these reports may be looked at as the worst case scenario being considered, and unnecessary effort was expended on it. But generally, the way the doctrine conceived the preventative measures for this tactical problem, as the Egyptians perceived it, was illustrative of the progress they had made.

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[108] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy*, pp.118-120.

[109] Full details can be found in Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.53-57 (The Egyptians used 300 British and 150 German pumps).

[110] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.53-57.

[111] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy,* pp.123-125.

[112] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy,* pp.123-125.

Another interesting example to show how the strategic concept of operations would infiltrate even minute details was the fighting load of the infantry soldier which worldwide doctrines at the time recommended to be up to 22 kg in order to have a balanced exchange between mobility and sustainment.[113] However, as the logic of the Egyptian offensive at the crossing was not looking for swift advances, but rather to build stable defences with the ability of the infantryman to face the Israeli armoured formations with his anti-armour weapons, the load for infantrymen crossing the Canal and infiltrating the first echelon tactical defence of the enemy reached 35 kg for equipment, and the Egyptians used hand pushed carriers for heavier elements.[114]

On the other hand, the structural weakness of the Egyptian armed forces in the operational art and manoeuvring in warfare persisted. This anomaly, however, was related to the deep cultural, societal and political dimensions which persisted: an obsession with political security, lack of familiarity with modern technology and information, limited tactical leadership and cohesion and lack of flexible patterns of command organization, although some measures to improve these were taken.[115]

The Egyptians might have sought earlier to ***restructure*** their general military capabilities by having a strong air power and armoured forces capable of sustaining and deciding the mobile armoured battles, In fact, however, tanks were used in most parts of the war as artillery with very limited mobile utility.

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[113] Stephen Kennedy et al., *Technical Report: The Carrying of Loads Within an Infantry Company* (Natick, Mass: US Army Natick Laboratories, May 1973). Field Manual, No 21-18, *Foot Marching*, Washington DC: US Department of the Army, 1990).

[114] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.57-62.

[115] This was the main argument of Pollack in explaining the Arab tactical ineffectiveness. Pollack, Kenneth, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln, NE: University of *Nebraska* Press, *2002*) See also, De Norvelle Atkine, “Why Arabs lose wars?” Middle East Quarterly, December 1999

Obviously, they chose the easier solution of accepting their operational structural weakness and getting round them by developing special strategic-operational formulae as has been indicated. For an objective assessment of the responsibility of the military leadership for restructuring the army, two points should be considered.

Firstly, this mission is related to handling conditioning strategic dimensions (political, cultural, economic, and socio-technological) which were almost outside the reach of military strategic command.

Second, it is very dangerous nevertheless to aim to modify the deep layers in any army's institutional, doctrinal and leadership structures in a short period prior to an imminent war as these modifications may lead to a temporary period of weak functioning, unless the military formation is unusually adaptable.[116]

Human

Egypt, as a result of its underdeveloped system of governance, always suffered a deficient system of **mobilization**. However, since the 1967 war, enlistment was extended to university graduates who had previously been exempt, and all forces were kept in the active system. This step, however, created dramatic social and developmental problems which pushed the Army to transfer some forces to the reserve from 1970.[117]

The leadership faced two types of problems in preparation for war; how to expand the forces' manpower, and especially the officer corps which was under strength by about 40%, and how to improve the mobilization system for general expansion and utility. The Egyptian Army after the War of Attrition numbered around 800,000 and it was planned to reach around 1.2 million to cover both active duties at the front and deep defences in the rear.

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[116] Derek Neal, "Change Management: Putting Strategy into Practice", in Cleary and McConville, *Managing Defence in Democracy* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2006) pp.246-49.

[117] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.48-51.

The Egyptian population, as Shazly indicated, was not capable of providing the armed forces with their yearly needs of 160,000 healthy and mentally capable individuals; in fact, the number only reached 120,000. As a result, the military leadership had to reduce the high level requirements for enlisting. The problem of the officer class was more devastating as the military academies were supplying a rate of 3,000 per year, and the armed forces needed at least 30,000 extra officers. Hence, leadership came up with a new invention; *the professionally limited officer*s who were selected from graduated NCOs and soldiers and were then given limited tactical education in a specific service with a severely limited inter-service training. This technique covered the shortage.[118]

Morale. After 1967, the morale of the Egyptian Army was at its lowest and membership even had a social stigma. Whatever the initial political and strategic aims of the War of Attrition, it resulted in the military forces regaining much of their self-confidence and trust in their commanders.[119] The increased intellectual and leadership qualities of the officer corps and the reduction of officer arrogance after 1967 narrowed much of the gap between officers and men.

Soldiers also enjoyed improved environmental and logistical conditions. The readiness of officers and commanders for self-sacrifice during the War of Attrition and the 1973 war helped them win trust in the armed forces.

Also, although the humiliating defeat of 1967 and the sufferings of the Egyptians in the following six years negatively affected morale at first, they led ultimately to improved armed forces morale when better training and achievements brought increased confidence. [120]

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[118] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.48-51.

[119] Fawzy, *Three Years War,* pp.375-378.

[120] Amos, *Arab-Israeli Military/Political Relations,* pp. 194-195.

The strategic command also recognised and used the influence of religion to speed up the improvement in the forces' morale and encourage self-sacrifice.[121]

The morale factor was extensively manifested during the fighting and was highly remarked upon by the Israeli forces.[122] In clear contrast to the experiences of the 1967 war, no apparent incidents of forces fleeing combat were recorded.

Education/Training. The Egyptian military academy was established in 1922 and the Army Staff College in 1939, but further developments in educational techniques were introduced after 1967; mainly the military missions to the Soviet Union. The Naval War College was established in 1946, the Air Academy in 1956 and the Military Technical College for graduating military engineers in 1957. However, some more specializations were lacking and were not established until after the 1973 war. In addition to the formal military education at tactical and operational levels, the staff system headed by Shazly formulated and broadcast many of the professional *directives* dealing with the evolving tactical and operational problems.[123] Also, more than one hundred military research projects were undertaken with varying success.[124]

Command. The Egyptian Army Staff achieved real improvements in the field of military command and communication. As Shazly described in detail, he established the tradition of monthly command conferences at which 40 generals from the staff system met around 50 of their operational counterparts, and around 14 military commands and their deputies met and discussed tactical and operational themes.

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[121] For example, through increasing the military missionary service in the army, planning the use of vocal religious mobilisation during operations by repeating "Allah Akbar – Allah is Almighty" and equipping the crossing forces with microphones for this purpose and also handing them a portable booklet (1.2 million copies published) and entitled; "Our Religious Doctrine is The Way for Victory", Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp. 84-87 & p.223 (Arabic version: pp.25-26 & p.243).

[122] Sharon, *Warrior: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001) p.304; Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* (New York: Warner Books, 1977) pp.434 - 435.

[123] Examples of these directives were mentioned in Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.44-46.

[124] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.44-46.

Adding to the much improved officer corps and officer-soldier relations, which enhanced morale and tactical cohesion[125] and increased general control, the tradition of *field visits* was a norm that peaked in the Egyptian army after the 1967 War;.

On the negative side, however, existing shortcomings continued to affect the armed forces' performance. Firstly, the command system was still much centralised and this affected the quality of tactical and operational leadership, a strict prerequisite for mobile warfare. Centralization caused a **time lag** in carrying out operational and tactical developments on the battlefield and further delays in formulating and distributing orders for action. Orders were usually out-dated by the time they were received and so did not fit with operational and tactical needs to enable a unified response. This was the case clearly in the Egyptian measures to contain the Israeli counter-crossing. The GHQ took two days (from 15-17 October) to realize the actual depth and scale of the breakthrough which had been evolving during that time and never responded to subsequent developments on time.

This prevented the Egyptians from making rapid responses or taking initiatives at the time that the breakthrough was limited. The problem of centralization even reached levels unprecedented since 1967, as Sadat and GHQ were sending specific orders to tactical commands, bypassing the operational and divisional commands, and many of the tactical commanders complained later that they received conflicting orders and their missions kept changing.[126]

The second problem was **sensitivity to criticism and rejecting critical approaches** which restricted information sharing and comprehensive debate in the command chain. The actual depth and criticality of the Israeli breakthrough were kept secret by Sadat's orders not only from the Egyptian domestic audience but from tactical and operational commanders as well. SAM battalions stationed on the Eastern bank of the Canal were taken by surprise by Israeli forces and they initially thought the latter were friendly forces as they had been kept in the dark regarding the presence of Israeli troops on the west bank of Suez.[127]

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[125] Amos, *Arab-Israeli Military/Political Relations,* pp.192-198.

[126] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp.376-379 (Arabic version).

Organisational

Organizational capability was improved after 1967 both in formal and informal norms. More professionalism in selection and promotions replaced the highly politicised system run by Amer in 1967. However, as is often the case in a security obsessed regime, full loyalty of the senior command to Sadat was essential. Even operational and tactical decisions were affected by this necessity. For example, the new T-62 tanks (whose 135 mm guns had better fire power than the 105mm of the best Israeli tanks) were distributed among units against the wishes of Shazly who planned to build a mighty armoured division for offensive exploitation. The motive for the wider distribution was a lack of trust in the head of this armoured division.[128]

The **ratio** between armoured (mobility) and artillery/infantry (firepower) elements was still skewed, as described earlier. Due to doctrinal and human factors, tanks were used mostly as static artillery.

Positive elements did exist, mainly in air-defence and logistics, while the balance was mixed in military intelligence and Special Forces.

The organisation of **air-defence** as an independent service was decided in 1968 to ensure better control and defence against Israeli deep aerial operations rather than better utility in offensive aerial and ground operations. It was a sign of the adaptability of the Egyptian Army, although contrary to general military thinking, and it paid off in the 1973 war.[129] The leadership kept strong organisational ties at the central level between the new service and air power. One positive result was the avoidance of tangible losses from friendly fire. However, as a general rule of Egyptian practice in 1973, this centrally-structured liaison negatively affected the management of aerial battles, and any battles requiring combined arms. Hence, only operations pre-planned in minute detail or static defensive battles were feasible.

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[127] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, p.297, (Arabic version).

[128] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.122-123 (Arabic Version).

[129] Maarof Bekhit, two times Jordanian Prime Minister and Army Major General described in his unpublished PhD thesis, *The Evolution of Egyptian Air Defence Strategy* (Kings College London, 1990) in detail the hard-evolutionary course of creating a central air-defence and developing its doctrinal, technical and command requirements.

Logistic/engineering/maintenance systems were much improved in 1973 as a result of better planning and control. The military engineers' regiments, in particular, whether in central formations or attached to divisions, showed high morale and innovative ability in both the Attrition and 1973 wars.[130] They were responsible for building SAMs shelters in 1969-70, building very sophisticated logistical roads and supply chains before the 1973 war, and carrying out the technical requirements of the crossing operation.

Military intelligence and surveillance were mixed. They functioned very well if they were sufficiently prepared for their mission, as in the pre-war stage, and they gave valuable and detailed information on IDF formations in Sinai. Deceptive capability was high at a strategic level and was very spectacular, and leaks were also prevented before the war. But hardly any operational or tactical measures were taken during the course of the war itself, apart from decoy light bridges and smoke during the crossing.[131] Also, military intelligence was very weak in gathering real time details of IDF advances. This may have been the result of IAF attacks on radar systems, the technological imbalance favouring Israel in electronic warfare, and interception by new US fine art technology that reached Israel after 11 October, as well as the fundamental cultural and political reasons described by Pollack. [132]

The **Special Forces** element featured in the Order of Battle as 34 battalions of "Sa'sqa" (Thunderbolt). The two paratrooper brigades may be considered as

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[130] The engineer corps lost around 5000 men in the process of building the SAM curtain during the Attrition only, in Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez* and Fawzy, *Three Years War*.

[131] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy,* p.185.

[132] Pollack, *Arabs at War,* pp. 1-14.

Rangers rather than real Special Forces. These forces received the best training in the Egyptian Army and had high morale and self-confidence, especially after the experience of the War of Attrition. As Finlan indicated, the utility of Special Forces can be strategic (decapitation) or, most commonly, operational (disrupting the advancing echelons or occupying critical territory) or, less preferably, tactical.[133] Egyptian Special Forces were used mostly for tactical tasks, but those that required daring capability. Their operational use under the original plan was abandoned because the lack of aerial protection led to huge losses during air lifting, and was ultimately considered unnecessary as the preference was against pushing the offensive beyond the bridgeheads.

Nevertheless, in some cases tactical utility proved operationally effective as the paratrooper brigade, under the command of Ibrahim Al-Rifa'ei who was killed in action, and a Sa'aqa battalion halted the progress of Sharon's forces to the north. But generally, the cautious attitude of the Egyptian leadership prevented the proper exploitation of Special Forces, apart from the operation at the Ras-Sedr oil sites.[134]

Material

The memoirs of Egyptian political and military leaders show a clear and accurate understanding of the comparative imbalance with Israel and the domestic and external factors aggravating it in the long run, especially in air power. Howeidy and Shazly detail the impact of Cold War dynamics and the procurement policies of the US versus the USSR towards their clients. While the United States provided Israel with the latest versions of equipment (as in the airlift from 11 October) the USSR provided Egypt with two generations lower, despite the generally higher quality of US equipment, especially in air power[135] (for example, only a few MiG23s were permitted to arrive before the war and the same applied to tanks and air defences).

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[133] Alastair Finlan, *Special Forces Strategy and the War on Terror*: *Warfare by Other Means* (London: Routledge 2009).

[134] Trevor Dupuy, *Elusive Victory,* p.418.

[135] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.18-24

Nevertheless, the Egyptian Army did develop its arsenal in quantity and quality. With 2100 tanks, mainly T45, T55 and a few T62s, 400 fighters (250 Mig 21, 19, 17) and medium and long range bombers in Ilyushin 18 and Tu16, 1000 artillery pieces and moderate naval power (4 destroyers, 15 missile boats and other variants),[136] Egypt's weaponry was at least comparable to that of the IDF in quantity and quality, except in air power where the F-4 was much superior to the Mig-21 in avionics and armaments.[137]

The only problem which affected the operational capability and outcome was the grade of air defences SAM. Egypt had around 150 batteries but mostly of the static SAM 2 and 3 and only a few pieces of the mobile SAM 6, many fewer than the Syrians. This limited capability would make any mobile offensive after the crossing very difficult, unless it was rectified by sufficient change in the Soviet procurement policy before the war.

Another obstacle was the military industrial infrastructure which was still in the stage of small arms and ammunition.

The above detailed assessment shows that Egypt's detailed strategies were high quality at the beginning but deteriorated massively with the decision to extend the operational scope and suffered till the end in both military and diplomatic domains. Guiding operational art and capability was outstanding as Egypt's strategic command moulded art and capability to reflect the strategic requirement while avoiding the structural weakness rooted in strategy dimensions, as explained in Chapter two. Unfortunately, from 14 October this operational component became incompatible with the new strategic situation.

To sum up, with the absence of clear policy, with moderate grand and military strategies and very competent enhancement of operational capability and strategic shaping of the operational art, the overall assessment of Egypt's practical layer

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[136] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez,* pp.18-24; Dupuy, *Elusive Victory,* pp.607-608.

[137] The detailed comparison can be found in David Rodman, *Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War: Diplomacy, Battles and Lessons* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press 2017) pp.75-78.

should be considered moderate. This was almost reflective of its moderate conceptual and institutional strategic abilities.

The Strategic Ability of Israel

The Conceptual Layer

In the Israeli case, due to the previous history of Haganah irregular warfare and the achievements of the 1948 war, practical orientation was favoured at the expense of theory, which Kober called "anti-intellectualism" and Adamsky "the lack of intellectual tradition".[138] This trend was traced in the previous chapter and the appendix, but it was at its strongest in the period leading up to the 1973 War as the outstanding military victory of 1967 seemed to emphasise the basic assumption of the rightness of the IDF's stand together with a sense of invincibility.

This anti-intellectualism can be understood through social and cultural factors, as in Kober and Adamsky's analysis. It further entrenched the Israeli trend towards a "*tacticization of strategy*". Strategy is a theoretical and practical task, of course, but its theoretical element is vital. This trend of considering pragmatic solutions and tacticized responses at the expense of the theoretical and adaptable elements of strategy was also dependent on other factors, including Israel's geostrategic perception, its economic situation, and political-military relations within the leadership of the country. All these favoured a rapid resort to offensive operations that seek a decisive victory on the battlefield.[139]

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[138] Avi Kober, "What Happened to Israeli Military Thought?", *Journal of Strategic Studies,* Vol 34, No 5, 707-732; Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, US, and Israel* (Stanford: Stanford Security Studies) pp.119-122.

[139] Michael Handel, "The evolution of Israeli strategy: the psychology of insecurity and the quest for absolute security ", in Williamson Murray, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1996) p.570 and his general argument in this chapter.

Clausewitz was not initially read in Israeli strategic institutions, and a limited Hebrew translation only became available in the 1980s.[140] Liddell Hart was thought to have had a greater impact on Israeli strategy[141] than was actually the case, and Allon's grasp of Hart's theory was mainly at the operational level.[142] In the 1950s and 1960s some theoretical discussions, strategic but mostly operational and doctrinal, occurred as discussed earlier, but after the 1967 War the tone and content of theoretical discussion was kept to a minimum.

At the grand strategic level, Ben-Gurion's theory of "infinite battle" between Arabs and Jews still prevailed, a theory that proposed that Israel should fight and win battles on an indefinite timescale as peaceful conditions with the Arabs were not possible, and Israel could not survive a single defeat while the Arabs could.[143] According to this theory, successive victories would enhance conventional deterrence and lengthen the periods of non-belligerency between wars to give Israel time for further preparation and state building (absorbing new immigrants and enhancing the socio-eco-technological layers for a better army).[144]

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[140] A discussion with William Owen, a former British officer and the editor of "Infinity Journal" who worked as a defence consultant in Israel.

[141] Tuvia Ben-Moshe, "Liddell Hart and the Israeli Defence Forces: Reappraisal", *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. **16**, No. 2 (Apr, 1981) pp. 369-391. The widespread counterargument was advanced mainly by Brian Bond, "Liddell Hart's Influence on Israeli Military Thought and Practice", *The RUSI Journal*, Volume **121,** Issue 2, 1976.

[142] A claim that was presented by Hart himself as he devoted the last section of his book to Yigal Allon, the Commander of the Southern Command in 1948, to try making a link between certain operations including Yoav and Horev and his own theory. There was no evidence that Hart's theory was a part of any formal strategic education in Haganah or later within the IDF.

[143] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy", p.537.

[144] See Sharon's speech in a meeting with the politicians to push them for a war decision in 1967*:* "Any link-up on our part with other powers is a mistake of the first order. Our aim is to make sure that in the coming ten or twenty years or generation or two, the Egyptians will not want to fight us," Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origin of the 1967 War*, p.225.

At the military strategic level, this theory entrenched the "*tacticization* of strategy" indirectly. Since the military tool was not going to be used to modify the will of the enemy, or destroy it in a war with total aims in order to create the conditions for an advantageous peace, but was to be used merely to achieve a cascade of military victories, strategic thinking was surrendered voluntarily to operational or even tactical practice.

There was, in addition, a growing conviction after 1967 that the Arabs could not attack, due to their permanent social and cultural deficiency, and that therefore Israel was *naturally* invincible.[145]

With such thinking in place, a new strategic "**concept**" was evolved which maintained the emphasis on the centrality of decisive battles by using air power and armoured fists but denied the perception of the *possibility* of the next war based on the Israeli understanding of the outcomes of the 1967 and Attrition Wars. Arabs were, it was thought, by nature unfit to launch a modern war on a large scale, especially using air and armoured forces, and the Egyptian Army, specifically, would need to obtain long-range bombers and fighters to confront the Israeli retaliatory and coercive deep strategic bombing if they sought to resume large-scale fighting.[146]

The conceptual bias towards operational and tactical issues was present in the evolution of Israeli military education up to the 1970s. After 1948, a school for officer corps' education and training was established with more emphasis on duty training. One of the shortcomings of these courses was their single-branch orientation which decreased the ability to launch combined warfare,[147] an approach that was only strengthened by the total armoured doctrine and force structure as will be discussed below. Staff officer education only began during the early 1960s and never moved beyond the operational sciences, and even then, not in a combined form. Chapter Three describes the attempt to establish a National Defence College in 1962 which was closed in 1966.

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[145] Claudia De Martino, "Changing narratives of the October war: collective memory and group perspective", in Asaf Siniver, *The October 1973 War: Politics, Diplomacy and Legacy* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2012).

[146] Asher, *Egyptian Strategy*; Chaim Herzog, *War of Atonement: The Inside Story of the Yom Kippur War* (Barnsley: Greenhill Books, 2003) pp.1-13.

[147] Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War, Volume 1: The Arab Israeli Conflict* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1990).

Despite this domestic lack of training, Israel sent many of her military cadre abroad, mainly to France, the UK and the US, for tactical training and a few were sent for operational and higher education, such as Ezer Weizman, the future head of the IAF, who went to the British Staff College.

The decision makers in the 1973 War were a very limited group; Golda Meir, the prime minister, and her "kitchen cabinet" composed of Meir herself, Dayan, Israel Galili and Allon. All except Meir had a strong military background and Allon particularly had a strong strategic conceptual ability, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The military echelon was headed by David Elazar and his deputy, Israel Tal, the father of the Israeli armoured corps who advanced the "all armoured" operational concept, and the head of military intelligence, Zeira. However, their grasp of strategy was heavily *tacticized* and focused on reaching for operational decisiveness as an end goal through a fixed operational formula.

This marks the Israeli **conceptual ability as low** in this war.

The Institutional Layer

Relational

The settings for civil-military relations in Israel, whether formal or informal, have been the subject of a complex debate. As Yoram Peri showed, there are different schools in describing them and their impacts.

The *conservative* school emphasises the formal subordination of the army to the political leadership in spite of some discrete frictions from time to time.[148]

The *critical* school has three sections; historical, social and political. This school adopts the position of considering that the military effectively hijacked the political and social environment, transforming Israel into a "garrison state".[149]

Another school mentioned but not named by Peri, may be called the *"revisionist"* school and includes Peri himself, with a strong foundation by Moshe Lissak further developed by Ben-Meir.[150] This school explored the Israeli paradox; although the IDF was clearly rooted in civilian life and enjoyed incontestable social high esteem, it kept itself away generally from domestic politics. This phenomenon is explained by the strong democratic trend, at least among the Jews themselves, rooted in the long history of the Jewish Diaspora.

Also important was the grave security status of Israel and the determined political leadership, especially at the beginning under Ben-Gurion who showed a strong resistance to any politicization of the armed forces by dissolving all politico-military factions and amalgamating them into the IDF, which consolidated the trend of non-politicized armed forces. As Sam Finer has indicated, military intervention in politics needs the officer corps to be in a special social stratum and isolated from the wider society and with high self-esteem.[151] Three factors within the IDF prevented such a process: reservists form the majority of the IDF and they are tangible forces, not "hollow" as in the case of the Arab armies; the double career and early retirement system which forced senior commanders to keep open relations with society; and the way the officer corps is generated from the conscripts not through unique educational and social backgrounds.[152] Since the days of the Haganah, when the practical qualities gained through experience of war were more appreciated than theoretical knowledge when socialist ideas enhanced the sense of equality, Israel did not recognise or permit the establishment of a special class of the military, or even to acknowledge the necessity for a formal military academy.[153]

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[148] This is the traditional view inside the IDF and it can be found in different writings which support this stand, for example, look at Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*; Luttwak and Horwitz, *The Israeli Army*; Cohen, *Israel and Its Army*; Amos Perlmutter, *Military and Politics in Israel* (Totowa, New Jersey: Frank Cass, 1978).

[149] For example: Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak, *Israel's Security Network: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Yagil Levy, *Israel's Materialist Militarism*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

[150] Moshe Lissak, *Israeli Society and its Defence Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict* (London: Routledge 1984); Yehuda Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

[151] Sam Finer, *The Man on Horseback*: *The Role of Military in Politics (*London: The Pall Mall Press, 1962).

However, this political isolation of the IDF was only one side of the coin; the other side is manifested in the area of national security and defence policy/strategy, the main interest here, in which the IDF enjoyed a status of *political-military partnership* rather than complete subordination to the political layer in order to achieve the policy-strategy ends required by politicians.

Although the IDF was truly instrumental in the hands of Ben Gurion, he did not press for constitutionalizing or institutionalizing the relationship; actually, he was very fond of the constitutional *ambiguity* that left room for his political manoeuvres, domestically and in the foreign policy of Israel which was not keen to define her borders.[154]

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[152] Luttwak and Horwitz, *The Israeli Army*, pp.202-206; Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots: Israeli Military in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp.278-281.

[153] Perlmutter added two more factors which may explain the paradox of Israel being a "garrisoned state" where its military does not intervene in politics. First, the common ideological base and sense of existential threat shared between the society and the military. Second, the strong influence of Ben-Gurion in depoliticizing the army. Amos Perlmutter, *Military & Politics in Israel Nation-Building and Role Expansion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977) pp.119-127.

[154] Yoram Peri, "Intentional Ambiguity: Why Do Crisis between Defence Ministers and Chief of Staff Reoccur Repeatedly?" in Elisheva Rosman-Stollman and Aharon Kampinsky (eds), *Civil-Military Relations in Israel: Essays in Honor of Stuart A. Cohen* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014) p.220.

The formal settings for civil-military relations in Israel, laid out by laws promulgated in 1953 and 1954, emphasised the political subordination of the IDF to the cabinet through the role of the minister of defence and gave the latter the right to order mobilization which the Knesset could cancel within 14 days of its announcement. The Chief of Staff was considered the supreme military command of the army, and performed a variety of roles: general chief of staff for all services, commander of all services, chief of staff of ground forces, and commander of all ground forces.[155]

The formal settings were opaque in defining the detailed relationship between the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Minister of Defence, and Chief of Staff. Only after the difficult experiences of 1973 did Israel seek to define these relations more clearly through issuing the Basic Laws in 1974[156] after the Agranat Commission, formed to investigate the functioning of the political-military leadership during the war, found serious faults in this area.

Informal relations, however, were more complex and ambiguous. As there was a lack of political guidance at the strategic level and in defence policy, the military imposed itself in this area, as Gonen, who would command the southern front in 1973, explained in a lecture in 1970:

> As a rule, logic requires that in a democratic country, like the State of Israel…the strategic objectives of the state be determined by the political authority since it is generally accepted that the military authority is the executive authority and not the authority that determines or should determine the country's political goals… In our case the order was generally **reversed**. The army made up its own operational plans and made **its own political assumptions** as to those plans. In each of the operational files and operational plans, the first page contained basic hypothesis which the army, in practice, accepted as political hypothesis. In general, once a year the

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[155] Ben-Meir, The Civil-Military Relations in Israel, pp.27-56; Peri, *Bullets and Ballots,* pp. 130-156.

[156] Peri, *Bullets and Ballots,* pp. 130-156.

> General Staff presented its plans to the political echelon and received its approval and sometimes its comments. [157]

Despite the presence of such basic hypotheses, given both its structural weakness and professional bias, the political statements were really an expression of the IDF's operational and tactical drives.

The IDF also created institutional platforms that in practice could obstruct the politicians' control over defence/policy strategy even if they wished to exert it. Many of the departments of the Ministry of Defence, especially procurement, the budgetary and, more importantly, the Planning and Policy Directorate were heavily militarized,[158] except in the case of Shimon Perez whose approach was strongly influenced by Ben-Gurion.[159]

As a general trend, with the lack of a complete formal setting for political-military relations, the true functioning of these relations was left to the crude balance of power, which could fluctuate over time and was skewed towards the IDF after the departure of Ben-Gurion, and to the interaction of specific personalities. Nevertheless, the military role in policy-strategy making fell just short of tutelage and closer to "partnership"[160] during this period.

In addition to the informal ways the IDF influenced politicians, as in the 1967 War, it had three formal means: the unique status of the COS, the role of military intelligence, and the General Staff's department of planning.

Before 1967, as has been shown, the COS was permitted to attend the cabinet, but after the defence portfolio was created he became a formal attendee. Chiefs of Staff after the 1967 War enjoyed vast public and military support. Although the Prime Minister selected the COS from candidates presented by the Minister of Defence, the appointment almost always reflected the will of the army. No incident of a dismissal of a COS took place; General Yarif resigned when Ben Gurion forced budgetary cuts upon him in 1953, and General Elazar resigned after the 1973 war in response to the Agranat Commission's report. While variations in personal relations existed, the will of the COS usually prevailed, especially over a Prime Minister who lacked a strong military background such as Eshkol and Meir or with unstable leadership characters such as Dayan in 1973.[161]

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[157] Ami Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War* (London: Routledge 2007) pp.145-6.

[158] Gluska, *The Israeli Military, pp. 145-6.*

[42] Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, pp.95-96.

[160] Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, p. 90 & p.101.

The trend of military strategic decisions, even decisions to go to war, in 1956, 1967 and 1973 showed the high influence of the COS on Israeli cabinets, although exceptions exist.[162]

Paradoxically, on some occasions there was an **over-involvement** of the political leadership in the purely operational, even tactical details which did not have direct strategic significance. Dayan's attitude in 1967-1974 was an example of this as he even intervened in, for example, how many shells should be assigned to the artillery counter-attacks barrages against Egyptian during the War of Attrition! And this situation was repeated many times in the 1973 war, and Sharon himself used his special relations with Dayan to impose his ideas from above on the southern commanders, Bar-Lev and Gonen.[163]

Ironically, Dayan himself called in his memoir for the non-interference of the Defence Minister in purely operational details when he was informed of the air strategy at the opening of the 1973 War, which aimed to concentrate its actions against the SAMs. Dayan thought it was an impossible task and would lead to air losses and permit invading Egyptian tanks to mass east of Suez. In fact, this example does not fit with the principle definition of over-involvement as the decision had a strong strategic significance.[164]

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[161] Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, pp.106-127.

[162] Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, pp.106-127.

[163] For a wider discussion on this point and Gur's ideas, see Ben-Meir, Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, pp.68-69.

The second tool for military influence was Military Intelligence (Aman). The Director of Aman was responsible for the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), and for directing civilian intelligence bodies - Mossad (external intelligence) and Shin-Bet (domestic security intelligence). The NIE was not confined to analysing adversaries' military capabilities or even intentions for war, but also proposed policy and strategy to deal with them. [165]

Paradoxically, when the Agranat Commission threw the lion's share of responsibility in 1973 on the Aman director, Zeira, for his frequent assertions that Egypt would not launch a war in the near future, he stated that his responsibility was to inform on capabilities and dispositions, not intentions, which should be deciphered by Israel's political leaders.[166] His claim was respected by many military commentators. However, some, such as Herzog and Shalev, even in a sympathetic study of Aman, believed that it is a shared responsibility.[167] Zeira's problem was not only the paradox of over-involving himself in strategy making and at the same time claiming less responsibility after the war, but he was guilty of intentionally obstructing some vital information before the war from being channelled to the strategic leadership, information which he thought incompatible with the "concept", a common cognitive malady.[168]

The "concept" created by Aman stated that Egypt would not fight before she had obtained air supremacy. This was later modified to suggest that Egypt might fight a limited or war of attrition if she could obtain long-range bombers and surface-to-surface missiles to deter Israeli deep aerial operations. This concept was strongly held, if not indoctrinated, and the minds of both political and military Israeli echelons were imprisoned in its parameters. As Herzog bitterly commented, this concept was not revised at any time.[169]

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[164] Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975) p.349.

[165] Ben Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in* Israel, pp.94-94.

[166] Eli Zeira, *Yom Kippur War* (Beirut, Intellectual Library, 1996, Arabic Translation) pp.101-114.

[167] Herzog, *War of Atonement*, p.278; Aryeh Shalev, *Israel's Intelligence Assessment before the Yom Kippur War: Disentangling Deception and Distraction* (New York: Sussex Publishers, 2014) pp.201-206.

[168] Uri Bar Joseph, "Israel's 1973 War Intelligence Failure", in P. R. Kumaraswamy*, Revisiting the Yom Kippur War*, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000) pp.11-36.

Moreover, although Egypt actually started to receive a few TU-16s and Scud missiles in the middle of 1973[170], the implications were not recognised as the Israeli leadership was addicted to its psychological belief that the Arabs would not dare to fight after their disaster in 1967. When alarms concerning the possibility of war were presented to the political leadership in May, Aman discredited them. When war did not erupt, as Sadat had postponed it for political and preparation reasons, Aman's conviction was reinforced.[171]

During the war, Egypt only used TU16s on the first day and fired two Kellet rockets at Tel Aviv; one was downed by the IAF and the other lost its way. Egypt also fired three Scuds on the last day at the breakthrough area west of Suez, just before the cease-fire, as symbolic actions.[172] None of these had any significant outcome as the Aman concept would predict; rather Egypt's strategy devalue them by concentrating on limited offensives under its air-denial umbrella.

The third tool for influencing political decision-making was the planning division under the Chief of Staff. The planning branch before 1973 was the only body in Israel to provide any form of strategic or quasi-strategic planning. As has been shown, in 1967 the planning branch was responsible for formulating IDF proposals for policy/strategic options to be sent to the cabinet. After the 1973 war, the Agranat Commission identified this structural problem and recommended transforming the branch into "The Planning and Policy Directorate" in the MOD; despite the change in nomenclature, the new directorate was formed by the cadre of the planning branch.[173]

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[169] Herzog, *War of Atonement*, pp.1-13.

[170] Shazly, The *Crossing of the Suez*, pp.113-114.

[171] Kumaraswamy, *Revisiting the Yom Kippur War*, p.8.

[172] Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, p.268.

To conclude the examination of the impact of the institutional settings on the ability for strategy making it is necessary to trace these effects on the functional parameters.

Functional

Information sharing was generally smooth. However, due to Aman's obsession with its concept and its monopoly on intelligence reports, some information was either delayed, dropped or its analysis was flawed.

For example, two war alerts from highly reliable Mossad sources on 30 September and 4 October reached Zeira, who delayed the first, and delivered the second without telling Meir of the source. This was considered by the intelligence community as a most reliable source, so Meir was used to reading its "raw" materials. If the cabinet had known on the morning of 5 October who the source was it would have taken the alert seriously. Also, the information regarding the Soviet evacuation of their experts' families from Cairo and Damascus on 4 and 5 October, led Aman to formulate an emergency report linking this step with a war alert.[174] If these pieces of information had reached the cabinet properly a decision of early mobilization would have been possible.

Critical comprehension. There was almost an absence of a formidable body for strategy making. The lack of a political initiative to fill this area enabled the IDF to assume semi-strategic propositions which were mostly expressions of its actual tactical and operational indoctrination.

More seriously even than 1967, there was a lack of comprehensive and critical debate on strategic options. This institutional blindness, combined with a conceptual deficit, deprived Israel of the chance to repair the actual fallacies of its practice in the 1967 and Attrition Wars, and to reorient its strategy making to the new developments in Egyptian ability, which were only acknowledged in retrospect.

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[173] Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel,* p.147.

[174] Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep: The Surprise of Yom Kippur and Its Sources* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005) p.156.

Regarding **authorization**, there was no formal attempt to challenge the government's right of decision making, and the IDF showed a very high degree of obedience even in the most crucial moments when it enjoyed a recognizable boost to its prestige, as after the 1967 War. For example, on the morning of 6 October 1973, the IDF accepted Meir's decision against launching a pre-emptive attack, even an aerial one against the Syrian front.

The random **over-involvement** of the political elites in operational, tactical and defence policies has long been a source of friction in the Israeli civil-military relations. The very existence of this point may cause many observers to underestimate the IDF's influence on policy and strategy making. However, as has been shown, this is the Israeli paradox in this area; the military retains control of the strategic area whereas the political level shows an extraordinary level of interference in military fine details. As Ben-Meir stated, this over-involvement happened usually in cases when the Ministers of Defence had huge military experience and prestige from their role before their political life, as was the case with Dayan and Rabin.[175]

The few incidents of over-involvement did not affect strategic practice but they certainly elevated the level of friction between the IDF and the politicians which might motivate the IDF generally to encroach in the other area with negative consequences.

As a general conclusion, **the institutional layer of** Israeli strategic ability showed **lower medium** grade (Israel was good in clear authorization and the formidable position of military, but had moderate information sharing and its totally defective critical assessment and the strategic intervention of politicians). The main result of this was the enhancement of the trend of **tacticization of strategy.** It should also be noted that these defective relations did not result in tangible negatives from the democratic political perspective as the military advanced to fill in the strategic-policy *vacuum* rather than violently annexing it, and usually enjoyed wide public support and political approval.

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[175] Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, pp.118-121.

The Practical Layer

Detailed Strategies

Policy and Grand Strategy

The complexity of delineating Israel's political aims in the 1973 War, as in 1967, originated in Ben-Gurion's belief in the improbability of peace and infinite battle.[176] Israel, according to this vision, should seek security by generating deterrence using decisive battles and its quality edge as the means. Israel's borders had been seen, since the 1948 war and afterwards, as a transitional concept whose delineation depended only on what military ability and political imposition could achieve. Israel should seek *"secured borders"* which entailed a widening of the geostrategic depth that would facilitate any offensive or defensive operations in the future.

These new "occupied territories" after 1967 were infiltrated by military presence and civilian settlements not only as a sign of consolidating their formal annexation, as in East Jerusalem in 1967 [177] and Golan in 1981, or informal as in the case of the rest, but as a means for development too. With the widening of geostrategic depth in the south specifically, settlements were not expected to behave as the former NAHAL, but in the West Bank and Golan they could act as early warning and satellite security posts against irregular threats despite their security burden. [178]

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[176] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy" in Murray, *The Making of Strategy*, p.537

[177] Israel informed the UN at the time that only laws and administration would be implemented in East Jerusalem without formal annexation. However, the Israeli High Court considered the city formally annexed. In 1980, Israel recognised Jerusalem, East and West as its united capital. (Avraham Sela, "Jerusalem" in *The Continuum Political Encyclopaedia of the Middle East* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002) pp. 391-498.

Political resolution?

Any impetus towards a political resolution was prevented by the euphoria of victory and the conviction that new territories could enhance security and development. In a meeting on 28 August 1973 that was described by David Elazar, Nahom Goldman, who was called the fourth father of Israel despite his deep criticism of Israeli policy towards the Arabs, stated that Israel should think of diplomatic processes to build a peace or at least a status of non-aggression, otherwise war would be imminent and inevitable. Dayan blatantly said the peace that Israel was looking for had actually been achieved in 1967 with secured borders and a show of deterrent military might.[179] Dayan was famous for his maxim; "No peace with Sharm-Al Sheikh is better than a peace without it".[180]

Dayan envisioned a plan for further territorial expansion, "the black belt" where further Syrian and Lebanese territories could be gained but which could only take place through war, which he believed would be impossible before 1974 at the earliest due to Egyptian unpreparedness politically, militarily and economically.[181]

Dayan presented another formal plan for annexing the West Bank, Golan and areas in Sinai, which included establishing a new permanent settlement at the borders. His rationale was that peace might be possible in 10-15 years, and this Israeli move would either push the Arabs to accept an unconditional peace or, at least boost Israeli security. His colleagues in the Labour party, however, considered this proposal likely to escalate the conflict and adopted a milder plan, as Yisrael Galili mentioned, which proposed only that settlements be built.[182]

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[178] David Newman, "Civilian and Military Presence as Strategies of Territorial Control: The Arab Israeli Conflict", *Political Geography Quarterly*, Vol.**8**, No.3, July 1989, 215-277.

[179] Hanokh Bartov, *Dado, 48 Years and 20 Days: The Full Story of the Yom Kippur War and of the Man Who Led Israel's Army* (Israel: Ma'ariv Book Guild, 1981).

[180] "Dayan: Better to Hold Sharm El-Sheikh Without Peace than Peace Without the Area", Jewish Telegraph Agency, 18 February 1971.

[181] Bartov, *Dado, 48 Years and 20 Days*, pp.182-186.

In a meeting of the Knesset in July 1973, an American proposal regarding a partial withdrawal of the IDF from Sinai and Golan, and a return to international control over the Passes was rejected, not only from the Right but from others also, including Bar-Lev who furiously warned against abandoning his defence line which was the most formidable Israel had and had already cost over $ 5,000,000.[183]

The pertinent political aim of Israel in 1973, once the war erupted, was to **maintain the status quo,** and what this policy needed from the military strategy was to *reverse the Egyptian military achievements* and expel them from Sinai with a heavy price to pay in order to preserve deterrence.

Only after the war, when shattering military and political discourses challenged the basic Israeli assumptions, and both sides, according to Kissinger's theory, were in a better position to consider or at least, in the case of Israel, to think of a political resolution, was there an atmosphere inside Israel conducive to debating the long-term political aims and conditions.

Despite its weak grand strategy making, as discussed earlier, Israel still was able to set a grand strategic inclination to direct all means to serve the military mission, rather than incorporating it into a higher wisdom.[184] With a grand strategy looking to achieve decisive military victories for deterrence and modifying the geopolitical landscape by force, all other state means; diplomatic, domestic, economic, intelligence, and technological, were well orchestrated towards this end.

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[182] Nadav Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally: The Shaping of American-Israeli Relations* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) p.473-474.

66 Bartov, Dado, 48 Years and 20 Days. See also, Yaacov Bar-Shimon-Tov, "The Bar-Lev Line Revisited", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol 11, Issue 2, 1988.

[184] Gil Merom, The Architecture and Soft Spots in Israeli Grand Strategy", in Lee and Willing (eds), S*trategic Logic and Political Rationality*, pp.207-241.

Domestically, Israel had a period of economic expansion after 1967 and the military budget was increased as a result. However, after the War of Attrition, the economy was under stress that led to cuts in the military budget; after 1971, the portion of GNP devoted to defence declined from 24.1% to 16.3%[185]. Socially, Israel became more developed, which affected the maturity of the military industrial infrastructure and the quality of recruits. However, the social tensions between eastern and western Jews started to erupt, albeit not on a large scale, as one accident in Golan before the war may show.[186] Once the war started, Israel could fully mobilize rapidly, which became decisive as will be shown.

Regionally, Israel aimed to keep Arab opponents busy with compelling security spearheads. Grand strategy in this area kept the same preferences as discussed earlier; a strategy aimed at securing understandings with the peripheral regions of the Greater Middle East and aggravating the Arabs' domestic tensions, as was the case when helping Iraqi Kurds and Lebanese Maronites.[187]

Internationally, Israel suffered a period of isolation after 1967 due to its post-war policy and Arab diplomacy which sought to pursue their economic benefits internationally. Nevertheless, Israel had always adopted a principle of *linking to a superpower* to give her both diplomatic protection and military support.

This dependence, encouraged by the US since the 1967 war, had shown Israel's utility to the US. It paid off in enhancing Israeli military power, especially in the darkest times of the 1973 War. However, it obliged Israel to take US concerns into consideration to a degree that the fathers of the state saw as unacceptable,[188] and to be more compliant to US pressures after the war.

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[185] Creveld, *The* Sword and the Olive, p.217.

[186] Bar-Tov, *Dado, 48 Years and 20 Days*, pp.238-239.

[187] Merom, "The Architecture and Soft Spots in Israeli Grand Strategy" in Lee and Willing (eds), S*trategic Logic and Political Rationality*, pp.207-241.

[188] Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy", p.573

As Safran indicated, US post-1967 policy shared Israel's requirement for the Arabs to accept an unconditional peace with border modifications. However, the US did not include Israel in the detailed post-peace territorial arrangements required or the diplomatic strategy to be followed. The main US interests, together with preserving the security and functionality of Israel, were to preserve some degree of conciliation with the Arab states to lessen their inclination towards the Soviets and to maintain the flow of oil. It was also interested over the long run in resolving the conflict since this remained the main door for Soviet steps in the region, and after the 1972 détente it was interested in setting limits on escalation if war erupted in order to prevent a major confrontation with the USSR.[189]

The political and intelligence community in the US disregarded the possibility of an Egyptian (plus or minus Syrian) offensive before the war. Once it erupted, Kissinger took the lead in American policy and strategy. He was very convinced that Israel would have a swift victory and aimed to give her a chance to achieve this partially, as if the Arabs were humiliated they would not accept the US as the main broker and an Arab victory would hurt American credibility in the region and globally vis-à-vis the Soviets.[190]

Kissinger did not support an open and full-scale airlift to Israel but as it faced drawbacks on the Egyptian front (losing 500 tanks and 250 fighters after the failed counter-offensive on the 8th) he was pushed by Nixon towards a fully-fledged airlift which was considered helpful in pressuring Israel for post-war concessions. [191]His aim was still to permit Israel a marginal victory but things moved quickly away from his plan. With his equivocal consent for Israel not to follow fully the ceasefire of the 22nd, and with the encirclement of Third Army, the Soviets issued an ultimatum; demanding the deployment on the battlefield of combined American-

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[189] Safran, *Israel, The Embattled Ally*, pp.423-425.

[190] Ferraro, *Tough Going,* pp.21-32.

[191] Kissinger, *The Years of Upheaval*, pp.514-515.

Soviet forces to oversee the implementation of the UN resolution or the USSR would act unilaterally.

Kissinger, who sees the war through the lens of Cold War geopolitical rivalry, overacted by putting international US strategic and conventional forces, on the highest peace time alert without consulting with allies.[192] The conflict was de-escalated after forming UN emergency forces from countries outside the permanent members of UNSC to implement the third ceasefire resolution on the 28th.

The role of the ***nuclear*** dimension in the 1973 War has generated two contradictory narratives. The first relates that Israel alerted her limited nuclear arsenal, supposedly around 13 bombs, and her means of delivery: Jericho I missiles with a few assigned Mirages, to send a "Nuclear Blackmail" to both the US and the Arabs in order to encourage the former to undertake a swift airlift of needed material and deter the latter from escalating their offensive. In the second narrative, the nuclear option was hidden and did not have a real impact on either player.

The first claim was supported heavily by Hersh[193] and others, including Creveld, who interpreted the controversial Syrian retreat from the southern Golan on the 9th as a response to this signalling,[194] although no strong evidence was supplied apart from scattered signs of alerting the nuclear formations.

However, extensive research was undertaken by Elbridge Colby, Avner Cohen *et al.* Based on credible historical evidence it suggested that Dayan proposed a preparation for a "nuclear test" to deter the Arabs in the darkest times on 7 October when he was in a very desperate mood, seeing the threat as one which would lead to "the destruction of the third temple", that is the destruction of Israel as an independent state. But this proposal was harshly rebuffed by Meir and the other members of the war cabinet. Dayan more likely sanctioned unilateral orders for enhancing the preparatory status of Israel's limited nuclear arsenal. Claims of alerting Jericho missiles may be unrelated given their low operational capability at the time.[195]

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[192] Ferraro, *Tough Going*, pp.95-105.

[193] Seymour Hersh, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991).

[194] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.232.

By reviewing the account of William Quant that the US was neither concerned nor even looked at this issue, Cohen ruled out the claim that Israel had attempted nuclear blackmail. Adding to this, Sadat's intention not to extend his offensive was conveyed very early to the US, and there is no evidence that the Egyptians ever received a signal concerning a possible nuclear threat.

Although Cohen's interpretation is convincing, Sadat's perception in the pre-war era, and Nasser's before him, certainly included a nuclear element. This compelled both to adopt a limited policy in the case of Sadat, and a limited strategy in the case of Nasser. Nonetheless, both Sadat and Nasser were more compelled by the conventional deterrence originating from the imbalance in capability.

The Israeli strategy of keeping their nuclear capacity entirely secret was proved correct as the situation stabilized after 9 October, and turned in Israel's favour after the 14th. Any explicit use or test would have been extremely counter-productive during the war and afterwards; it would probably have led to a direct Soviet intervention with an accompanying threat of international nuclear war, and also a post-war acceleration of the regional nuclear arms race.[196]

Military Strategy

Policy/grand strategy required a task from the IDF: operational decisiveness and defending the occupied territories. The same structural problems between policy/grand strategy and military strategy/operations that were discussed in 1967 applied – that is the absence of an overriding logic to manage military conduct in order to modify the will of the enemy, and the lack of a specific formula to decide comprehensively upon the scale and nature of such military tasks.

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[195] Elbridge Colby, Avner Cohen et al., T*he Israeli Nuclear Alert of 1973: Deterrence and Signalling in Crisis* (Arlington County: CNA Centre for Naval Analysis, April 2013).

[196] Colby, Cohen et al., T*he Israeli Nuclear Alert of 1973.*

The IDF had consolidated its strategic orientation that Israel should keep its defensive and deterring postures through sequential and complementary layers. As discussed earlier, these required an early warning 24-48 hours before the war, an air campaign to attain supremacy, benefiting from a wider geostrategic scale and with impending air power as delaying mean in order to complete the mobilization of reserves. Then a high tempo armoured operation should follow to annihilate the enemy armies with a Blitzkrieg-style approach.

However, this military strategy had been indoctrinated in the IDF a long time before 1967**, and subsequent geostrategic and operational changes** after the 1967 and Attrition Wars provided opportunities and challenges for Israeli military strategists. It is a highly complex task to assess the military strategy practical tier given its weak policy/grand strategy which had surrendered its logic to operational formula. However, we still can get a clue by looking at two areas: how the IDF perceived ***post-1967 changes***, and their implications for its theory of victory and how to cope with it; and how it ***adapted*** its military strategy once the war had erupted.

Pre-War

As the Israeli defensible space tripled in 1967, the IDF found itself in a new and unaccustomed geostrategic position. The warning time was extended and there was much less urgency to transfer the battles to the enemy's territory. However, the new situation also presented serious challenges.

Firstly, by maintaining the occupation after a decisive and humiliating military victory followed by a period of diplomatic stagnation, Israel was somewhat isolated internationally. This served to harden the political requirements needed before launching **pre-emptive air strikes** if enemy offensives were impending. This is exactly what happened in 1973 and it forced the cabinet to reject Elazar's proposal for such an attack if only by air power and only in the Syrian theatre.[197]Hence, air supremacy could not be attained early in the war, keeping in the mind the extensive Egyptian/Syrian air defences too.

Secondly, the expanded geostrategic space decreased the IDF's ability to use **internal lines** to mass forces on one front and shift them instantly between fronts as the situation required. Given the possibility of war on more than one front, an option used by Egypt and Syria in the 1973 War when the IDF feared that the Jordanians would join to form a third front, the IDF was forced to accept the bitter option of focusing on the most critical front until the situation stabilized and then move to the other front, an approach which offers to the opponent on the other front a wide window of opportunity to be exploited.

Thirdly, the political decision to retain the Occupied Territories forced the IDF to seek a modus operandi for which it had little skill or interest – the construction and maintenance of static defences.

After 1967, the traditional proposal for mobile defence on both fronts was rejected on the basis of denying the Arabs any foothold, even temporarily, if they launched limited attacks. When Bar-Lev took the office of GOS in 1968, he adopted very strict and substantial defence systems in both Sinai and Golan in response to the War of Attrition. Both systems entailed a network of connected strongholds, *meozims*, which were served with an advanced network in the rear to facilitate the combination of static and mobile defence operations.[198]

This **static defence meant** the IDF was torn between the political requirement and its doctrinal settings, and led to compromise solutions which required the capability to undertake both static and mobile defences. Strategically, these political decisions were faulty. A short-lived Egyptian foothold would not have led to political gains if it was thrown back swiftly and retaliation followed. Such a scenario had already occurred during the War of Attrition and did not lead to any strategic turn. Only if this foothold was entrenched due to weak IDF operational capability would it have a strategic effect.

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[197] Herzog, *War of Atonement,* pp.52-55.

[198] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.225.

Finally, the decisive military victory in 1967 and what was considered at least an advantage in the War of Attrition created a status of **blinding arrogance** among Israeli strategists. The IDF looked at the Arabs as inferior and overestimated its own ability, so it disregarded any possibility of an Arab ability to go to war.

For example, the IDF formulated a plan, *Goshen,* for developing force structure and acquisition which entailed the formation of 22 divisions and enhancing naval and ground ability, other than tanks. This plan was rejected on the grounds of its cost and the fact that an Arab offensive was judged to be improbable. Even the plan's more modest version, *Ofek*, was not applied to a large extent.[199] The lack of preparedness to apply the defensive plan of *Shovach Yonim* was related to this factor too. The underlying assumption of the Ofek Plan was that the Arabs would only be able to launch a war after 1976.

Plans

The main defensive plan in Sinai was "*Shovach Yonim*" which offered an extensive, yet flexible, exploitation of the Bar-Lev line. This defensive line in Sinai has been the subject of the two belligerents' contested claims either underestimating or overestimating it in retrospect.

All Egyptian historians and leaders highly overestimated the value of this line in order to highlight the scale of their achievement and used the pre-war Israeli accounts as evidence of its centrality to Israel's defence. In return, most Israelis underestimated the line in retrospective accounts of the 1973 War by indicating the shift that occurred with Sharon's appointment to the Southern Command which aimed to decrease the static defence element by abandoning one third of the strongholds (reducing them from 31 to 22).[200] Since these strongholds were separated by gaps of between 7 and 10 miles, this made the front easily penetrable.

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[199] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p. 219.

However, as Herzog indicated, the Bar-Lev line was more than simply a strong static defence line; rather, it was a sophisticated defence system which Bar-Lev declared unbreakable when he said in August 1973 that it would need the engineering corps of both the American and the Soviet armies to overcome it.[201]

Behind the strongholds, which were each guarded by an infantry brigade, there were two defence lines, 10 km and 25 km behind. One armoured brigade was stationed in the first line and two in the second. Once the war alert was received, the first echelon would move to the front line and the second echelon brigades would detect the main Egyptian threats in order to launch a counter-offensive. *Shovach Yonim* (Dove-Cote) acknowledged these preparatory steps and stated that the Bar Lev Line was intended to bear the tension **until** reserve forces could be called in; a mobilisation of three armoured divisions at least, for counter-crossing the Canal and annihilation of the enemy.[202]

The plan addressed the strategic objectives: defending the occupied territory and enabling the annihilation of the enemy. However, it did not address the scenario of a warning being received so late that the reserve build-up would be delayed, or what to do with the strongholds if they were already overrun by Egyptian forces. This planning defect led to confusion once the war erupted.

Adaptable

Repulsing the Crossing and the Counter-Offensive (6 – 14 October 1973)

Strategic Ordeal. The cabinet meeting on the morning of 6 October, after sensibly refusing the pre-emptive strike proposal, ordered a partial mobilization. Dayan, still caught by his underestimation of the Arab armies, proposed mobilizing two divisions only. Golda Meir however accepted Elazar's request to mobilize four. He then acted independently to exceed these limits. Israel sent strong messages for the US to convey to the Russians and Egyptians that Israel did not have any intention to launch an offensive and to warn Egypt against initiating one.[203]

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[200] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.225.

[201] Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso Books, 2012) p.71.

[202] Dayan, *The Story of My Life*, pp.381-382 ; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* p.225.

In two days, the 6th and 7th, all Israeli defences in the Sinai and Golan were shattered, and the Arab armies destroyed most of the pre-war standing forces on both fronts. In Sinai, of specific concern here, the IDF lost two-thirds of its armour, 200 tanks out of 300, all strongholds except two, of which one would fall later, and had 100 planes downed. Deterrence, the core of the Israeli security policy, had failed. Despite her control of Sharm, Israel was blockaded at Bab-Al Mandab, there was not enough warning to have the mobilization ready on time, air and armoured superiority was cancelled out by counter-measures, and the Egyptian army exhibited a high degree of motivation and training.

Catastrophe overshadowed the next cabinet meeting on 7 October. Here Dayan was at the other extreme and became totally desperate.[204] In addition to the controversial nuclear alert discussed earlier, he advocated abandoning the first line of defence, and forming more stable defences at the second (in the Passes of Sinai). This advice, despite its soundness given the grave imbalance at the front, was rejected.

The same day, Sadat rejected the American and Soviet cease-fire request. The cabinet still had a guarded optimism, as mobilization was underway on schedule and three armoured divisions were already in Sinai, two of reservists under Dan and Sharon and the third led by Mandler. The Cabinet therefore ordered the IDF to launch a theatre counter-offensive in the Sinai.

This counter-offensive on the 8th to uproot the Egyptian bridgeheads turned out to be a mess. The chaos in the southern command, where many competing generals were under the weak command of Gonen, resulted in poor planning and confusion.

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[203] Herzog, *War of Atonement*; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.224.

[204] Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep,* pp.229-232.

The plan stated that Dan's *ugda* would attack the northern sector, facing the Egyptian 2nd Army, with a thrust from north to south keeping his division just out of the range of the artillery. Based on Israel's 1967 war image of the Egyptian forces, this vertical offensive was thought to be enough to uproot the consolidated bridgeheads. Dan's ugda was in fact rather largely decimated. Mandler was meant to attack the southern sector facing the Egyptian 3rd Army but this was a failure and Sharon was asked first to relieve Mandler, and then was called back to the north and ended his day without fighting.[205]

The impact of this defeat, which disclosed the reality that the Israeli leadership had been trying to ignore for the first two days, was heavy. Israel was facing a totally different type of war and opponents from 1967. The cabinet meeting on the 9th still had some hope based on two factors: an appeal to the US for an airlift to replace the huge hardware losses which Aman estimated would be total within 48-72 hours[206], and to formulate a salvage strategy.

Salvage Strategy. The Cabinet's salvage strategy entailed focusing on the Syrian front, due to its geostrategic criticality, by sending three armoured divisions exerting IAF pressure on it, while keeping the forces in the south strictly on the defensive. The Israeli command recognised by now the uselessness of repeating a frontal or horizontal offensive on the Egyptian bridgeheads, especially when the Egyptians were now in a defensive posture, and it gambled on waiting for the Egyptian offensive to be broken before preparing for a counter-crossing or at least securing a future Israeli thrust with forces from the Syrian front. With this counter-crossing, the dramatic political and military losses could be at least lessened if not partially reversed.

This was a reasonable military strategy which the southern command had difficulty in imposing on its generals, especially Sharon. Dayan and Elazar sent Bar-Lev to impose order and to be the real commander under the nominal command of Gonen. Things were stabilized.

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[205] Sharon, *The Warrior: An Autobiography*, pp.295-305; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.227-228.

[206] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.227-228.

Repulsing Egyptian Offensive, Counter-crossing and Exploitation (14 – 28 October)

Once the Syrian front was stabilized by the 13th, the focus could be directed to the south. The main proposal was a counter-crossing of the Suez Canal. Counter-crossing was seen as more than simply an operational enabler to encircle, cut the managerial/logistic supplies and then annihilate the Egyptian forces on the eastern bank. It performed two more functions: to use the ground forces as a mean to attain air supremacy by attacking the SAM batteries on the western bank, and to obtain a future negotiating card by seizing as much territory on the western bank of the Canal as possible and/or seizing a vital political target such as a major city like Ismailia or Suez, or one of the field armies.

On the night of 15-16 October the counter-crossing commenced, and by the day of the 19th, three armoured divisions were in the west opposed only by three Egyptian brigades: one armoured, one mechanised and one paratrooper, and Sa'aqa battalions. An initial thrust to the north and Ismailia was repulsed, but in the south, Adan, after his failure to seize Suez, succeeded in destroying the SAM umbrella and the 3rd Army supply lines in this sector. (Map 3)[207]

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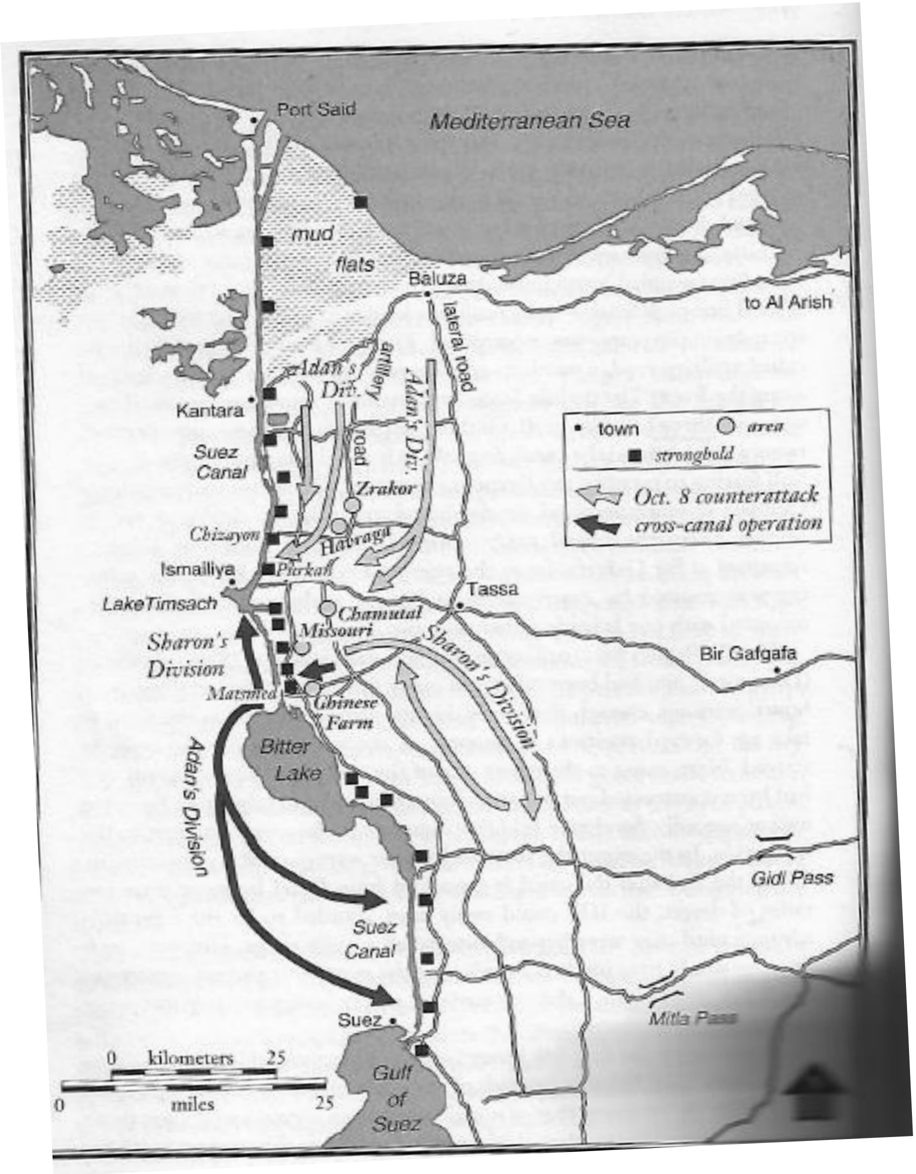
[207] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.226.


Port Said
Mediterranean Sea
mud flats
Baluza
to Al Arish
lateral road
artillery road
Adan's Div.
Adan's Div.
Kantara
Suez Canal
Zrakor
Chizayon
Havraga
Ismailiya
Pirkan
Tassa
LakeTimsach
Chamutal
Missouri
Sharon's Division
Sharon's Division
Matsmed
Chinese Farm
Bir Gafgafa
Bitter Lake
Adan's Division
Gidi Pass
Suez Canal
Mitla Pass
Suez
Gulf of Suez
• town
○ area
■ strongbold
Oct. 8 counterattack
cross-canal operation
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Israeli Counteroffensive on the 8th

Regardless of the contested claims as to who breached the first ceasefire on 22nd, the second ceasefire was ignored by the IDF so as to widen its gains in the west and extend its reach to the Suez-Cairo road and the north-western coast of the Red Sea. [208]

The most effective elements in this strategy, adding to its competent logic of counter-crossing, was *leashing the military conduct and exploiting the awkward Egyptian moves*. In contrast to the previous war, the three military divisions were prevented from repeating assaults on the big cities, planning to advance on the Cairo road, or moving to annihilate the Egyptian 3rd Army.

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[208] Avraham Adan, *On the Banks of Suez: An Israeli General's Personal Account of the Yom Kippur War* (English Edition, New York: Presidio Press, 1991); Gamasy, *The October War Memoirs*, pp.426-431.

If the IDF had undertaken any of these three possibilities, provided that it succeeded, which is doubtful given the IDF experience in the 1982 assault on Beirut (which was much smaller, militarily weaker, and internally divided), the operational and strategic environment would have been extremely hostile. There would have been a significant risk of failure and decimation, the Russians would have directly intervened militarily, and the Egyptians' *will to resist* would have been greatly accelerated.

Nevertheless, the deciding factor in abandoning more aggressive moves was the Cold War dynamic which created a paradox; both superpowers were on nuclear alert and, as a result, each pushed her ally for de-escalation. The US, moreover, realized the opportunity offered by Sadat's shift in policy and decided to exploit it.

Disengagement (28th October – January 1974)

Israel's strategy at this stage was generally dependent on the US, but with signs of recalcitrance too, which aimed to enhance the Egyptian *perception* of its military dilemma which would be beneficial to Israel at the negotiation table as the Egyptians would become *more eager* for a cease-fire. Here the *political will* is dependent on perceiving the political and military outcomes and feeling greater compulsion to stop fighting.

Israel used diplomacy to stall and frustrate her opponents, whether in Kilometre-10 negotiations, the Geneva conference or Kissinger's piecemeal diplomacy. However, Israeli vulnerabilities were difficult to hide too; the narrow and unstable extension of their forces in the west which were now surrounded by comparable forces, with regenerated weapons through the Soviet air/sea lift; the Bab Al-Mandab blockade; and also -- of great importance to Meir's cabinet in the middle of a post-war investigation and public fury in Israel -- the human cost including returning the bodies of casualties and prisoners of war.

To conclude, Israel's practical detailed strategy proved bankrupt in the first half of the war, but recovered quickly helped by the Egyptians' and Syrians' grave mistakes, the massive American support and airlift, and the real courage and innovation of the IDF tactical commanders on the ground both operationally and strategically.

Guiding fighting power

Strategic leadership should provide the guiding strategic formula under which fighting ability is developed and modulated. However, while generating detailed strategies is the "software" of any military strategy (utility), guiding the fighting power is its "hardware" (assets).

The strategic command's responsibility for guiding fighting power is dual, as indicated before: to mould the fighting power for a specific strategic concept and to act as the general guide for linear build-up and counter-balancing the enemy operationally in a specific context. Pre-war guidance should be discussed first, and then its adaptation during the war, which proved highly crucial in the Israeli case of 1973.

Pre-War

The general pattern in the area is the continuity between before and after the 1967 War, except for a few changes in response to the new geostrategic landscape.

Doctrinal

After 1967, the IDF was indoctrinated to undertake two missions - some form of defence, the nature of which was contested till the end, and highly offensive missions depending totally on air power and armoured strength.

Generally, the IDF was not ready for proper **defensive missions** and the cult of the offensive had been emphasised for a long time.[209] As Kober indicated, factors had changed after 1967 which had necessitated a review of the basic assumptions of the Israeli operational art, a review that never took place. These factors were the changing trend in dominant weapon systems in the 1956 and 1967 Wars which had favoured mobility over firepower and offence over defence but did not recognise that their antidotes in air and armoured power were available, the sense of a weak and unsophisticated enemy which was becoming stronger, and the transition from "artificial" strategic depth which could assist manoeuvring to defending the extended area of the occupied territories.[210]

The IDF was not prepared for a type of war in which **air power and armour were turned around,** either because the enemy worked to oppose them to some extent and/or to evade them in his military strategic planning (counter-operation, or counter-planning). Moreover, in considering air force and tanks as a panacea, the logic of **combined arms** was neglected.

IDF doctrine was a two-arm doctrine with other forces playing rudimentary roles.

At the operational level doctrine, the air force and armour inherited the longstanding battle of ideas in which the outcome was decided not by positive strategic input but rather by misconceiving the lessons of 1967 and Attrition Wars together with some domestic factors.

For the air force, as before 1967, the doctrine was in favour of two missions; obtaining air supremacy first and undertaking tactical support with some interdiction to follow. In the War of Attrition there were three phases. In the first phase (September 1968 – July 1969), the IAF had to launch limited retaliatory strikes against military and economic targets close to the front; acting as "flying artillery" and lifting Special

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[209] Shimon Naveh, "The Cult of the Offensive: Pre-emption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought", *Israel Affairs*, Volume **2**, Issue 1, 1995.

[210] Avi Kober, "The Rise and Fall of Israeli Operational Art", in Olsen and Creveld, *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 167-171.

Operations forces to the rear. During the second phase (July 1969 - January 1970), the mission was mainly against SAM batteries, and once the Egyptian air defences had fallen by January 1970, *in the third phase* strategic air attacks followed, which caused direct Soviet intervention, both political and military.

After the conclusion of the War of Attrition, the IAF returned to its supremacy seeking/tactical support doctrine. However, it did not appreciate the technological and doctrinal advances of the Egyptian, and to some extent the Syrian, air defences. On the Egyptian front, the main air defences were SAM3 and lesser numbers of modified SAM2. The mobile multi-range SAM6 were beginning to arrive, supported by plenty of AA guns for low levels, and some SA7 which were much more accurate for low level. Although the IAF was aware of the existence of these elements and even had ECM to work against the SAM2 and 3, it was not aware of the technological features of SAM6, let alone active in inventing technological or tactical counter-measures.[211] Also, the IAF underestimated the Egyptian air defence doctrine which fused these elements in a comprehensive and complementary way. The result was grave; the loss of 104 first line fighters in the first half of the war.

Support for the *armoured* role had a massive push from the success of the 1967 War which enhanced Tal's idea of armoured fists (using large concentrations of tanks to crack the opponent's defences or the opponent in a mobile tank battle benefiting from efficient tactical-technical training for crews and unmatched tactical leadership, and an element of air support) to reach a status of "tank-mania". [212]Also, this trend was emphasised by the general Israeli sensitivity towards human losses in battle which was encountered more with infantry missions than tank operations.[213]

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[211] Meir Finkel, *On Flexibility*, *: Recovery from Technological and Doctrinal Surprise on the Battlefield* (Redwood City CA*:* Stanford University Press, 2011) pp.170-171.

[212] Sharon, *The Warrior*, p.304.

[213] Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War, Volume 1: The Arab Israeli Conflict* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1990).

As indicated in the last chapter, Israeli planners did not consider their own problems in running the 1967 battles themselves, especially in the Rafah sector, or that the poor performance of their opponents resulted mainly from contextual variables - problems with the political-military system, socio-technological and doctrinal issues – and that these could be resolved , at least partially.

Many accounts of 1973, from Egyptian, Israeli and worldwide analysts, overestimated the role of anti-armour missiles in the war. The Egyptian use of this shield did not entail primarily a new technology, as anti-armour missiles were not unfamiliar to the IDF when they encountered them; the older version (Shmel) just after the 1967 War destroyed one tank from the eastern side of the Canal, and Saggers guided missiles themselves, more accurate and penetrating, were launched at the Israelis in 1971 on the Syrian front. In fact, as most of the effects were because of short RPG-7 and mortars; tank losses were mostly due to these weapons rather than the guided missiles.[214]

As Finkel indicated, the source of surprise was not the weapons themselves but the Egyptian *modus operandi* in using them - in large quantities in the hands of well-trained forces and in complementary fashion to extend and consolidate the zone of lethality.[215]

With all armoured forces lacking significant mechanized infantry and artillery, Egyptian infantry equipped with RPG-7s, on the flanks, and supported by mortars, tanks and guided missiles from both tactical and operational reserves (west of the Canal) were able to withstand the armoured fists and wreak havoc on the advancing Israeli armoured forces equipped with fast mobile tanks with 105 mm turrets (Centurions, M-40 modified, and M-60). The IDF lost 200 tanks in the first two days, and another hundred in the failed counter-attacks on 8th October.

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[214] Finkel, *On Flexibility* pp.155-157.

[215] Finkel, *On Flexibility,* pp.155-157.

These flawed doctrinal settings had grave impacts at the upper operational and military strategic levels, putting the ground forces at a grave disadvantage which amounted to a failure of the defence system.

However, the real impact of this technological, but mainly doctrinal, surprise was *psychological* at the level of political-military leadership.[216]

Human

The Mobilisation ability of Israel enables her to generate a full army in 48-72 hours, a mobilisation which had been achieved many times before the 1973 War. However, there were two developments occurring after the 1967 War which undermined this capacity.

The first development was increasing the period of conscription and reservists' training to meet the expansion of the defence lines after 1967 and the constant alerts of the War of Attrition. The conscription period was increased by 6 months for men and women, becoming three and two years respectively, the recall periods for reservists were increased by two months, and the reserve age limits were raised. However, after the front became quiet after the cease-fire in 1970 and with the consolidation of the "concept" which entrenched Israeli disregard of the Arabs' ability and intention to fight, socio-economic constraints forced the politico-military leadership to relax the parameters of mobilization and conscription and return to pre-1967 levels.[217]

This relaxation was not in quantity only, but in quality as well. For example, when war exploded on 6 October, the infantry brigade on an important front was an undermanned *reserve* brigade from Jerusalem.[218]

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[216] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, p.155 & p.171.

[217] Michael Barnett, *Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State and Society in Egypt and Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) pp.185-210.

[218] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.225.

Morale. Despite the desperate mood that infected the entire Israeli population and the cabinet, the IDF kept a moderate standard of morale after the initial drop.

The decline in morale was mainly due to the shocking results of the first half of the War, in which the entrenched sense of invincibility and the thinking that considered Arab soldiers as "flocks of coward mice" who would run away once Israeli forces and fire approached, faced the hard reality of the Arab achievement and Israeli logistic and command incompetence. For the first time in Israeli military history a new type of casualty occurred, soldiers suffering from combat shock, an eventuality that the medical corps was not prepared for.[219]

However, the Egyptians' setback on 14 October, and the Syrians' before it, restored much of the morale. What really boosted IDF morale, especially on the Egyptian front, was the tactical leadership which showed a high degree of sacrifice to the extent that Adan's battalion commanders, during the hard days of the 15th and 16th, were killed and replaced twice over.[220] Sharon's forces as well paid heavy price which affected whole families fighting close to each other, an aspect of the reservist system which maintained the social structures of normal life.[221]

Education/training and command criteria were similar also to pre-1967. Enhanced practical training and field education rather than building institutions for theoretical platforms was still the norm. The IDF still adopted the concept of "mission command" without being preceded by extensive theoretical and doctrinal formulas, based instead on, and invited by, practical necessities.[222]

However, within the command structure of 1973, the dual system of reservists at the senior level led to the existence of a large pool of talented generals with 1967 fame and who were eager to give a hand in planning and command. Their extensive and often contradictory advice caused confusion in the command environment. Sharon himself was accused of jeopardising his forces by pushing for risky and unauthorized operations regardless of the strategic logic or safety of his troops, both before the 15th and after, in order to enhance his fame as a hero for political utility. He responded with the same accusation against his superiors, as mentioned before.

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[219] George W. Gawrych, *The Arab Israeli War: The Albatross of Decisive Victory*, Leavenworth Papers No. 21, 1996.

[220] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* p.235.

[221] Sharon, *The Warrior,* pp.315-325.

[222] Eitan Shamier, *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the US, British and Israeli Armies* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011) pp.82-83.

Another command deficit that was exposed by Sharon was the reluctance of the upper middle operational commanders to oversee operations closely in order to obtain a real picture of the unfolding operations. Gonen in the beginning was content to remain in the Negev, and then he moved to Bir-Gafgafa.[223] During the most challenging days of the counter-crossing, neither he nor Elazar cared to visit the operational area; only Dayan and Bar-Lev did so.[224]

Organisational

The *Logistical* system suffered a degree of confusion and inefficiency in the standstill period before the 1973 War although it kept in good shape generally.

After the first round of the War of Attrition, the IDF under the directive of COS Bar-Lev constructed a heavy defensive line with an extensive network of lateral and longitudinal roads serving it from the rear. The plan involved creating a rampart which initially reached 20 m but was then lowered on purpose at some points during Sharon's time in southern command to facilitate a possible counter-crossing, including one used in Sharon's crossing at Defressoir that was called "*yard*".[225] The road network proved to be helpful for mobile defence and offence especially in the second half of the war.

As the IDF was indoctrinated to use internal lines of the pre-1967 War period for both operational and tactical benefits, the tripled distance was a strong challenge to the logistical ability of an army based on heavy tanks which were either transferred on carriers with more time wasted in allocation and assembly or were transferred on their own power with a high degree of maintenance required. This **logistical strain** which was aggravated by the delayed warning deprived the IDF of its famous ability to move through the reserve armoured divisions on battlefields in_good_order and well equipped. Dan's division for example went to war with only three artillery pieces and most forces suffered a grave problem in preparedness and maintenance.[226]

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[223] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.225 & 227.

[224] Sharon, *The Warrior*, p.331.

[225] Sharon, *The Warrior*, p.307.

Force structure was similar to pre-1967, with more bias towards the tank components to the extent that a proposal to have pure tank divisions devoid of artillery was considered at some point.[227]

Material

Understandably, weaponry policy followed doctrinal orientation, as before 1967. There is a dual relationship and interdependence between both but some conditional variables may exist too.

For example, shifting the main military supplier from France to the US after 1967 enhanced the hardware in options and quality. On the other hand, economic constraints and military cuts after 1970 forced the IDF to cancel many of its development programmes in the navy and the mechanised infantry.

Negatively, the influx of US weaponry, with its high quality in air and armour, emphasised the offensive doctrine and obscured any insightful attempts to revisit it. The IAF now had 358 first line fighters, F-4s with tripled ordnance capacity and better avionics and electronic counter measures in comparison to the Mirage III.

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[226] Sharon, *The Warrior*, p.29.

[227] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive, pp.*218-220.

Armoured brigades were developed as well to reach 2100 tanks, mostly advanced Centurion, Leopard, M-40 and M-60.[228]

In line with the biased doctrine towards the air and armoured forces, all other services or ground elements were neglected.

The Israeli navy had formerly possessed two destroyers and a few missile and torpedo boats and no submarines. Two naval incidents deprived it of a destroyer and a submarine. The destroyer was sunk in the Eilat operation by two Egyptian *komar* missile boats, which fired *strixs* missiles, and a British-built submarine was lost on its way to Israel. [229]

The Israeli navy chose to focus on missile boats for economic and counter-capability reasons, coastal defence and limited littoral operations. Israel bought a few missile boats and commenced building its own *Rechef* boats, but only a handful were ready before the 1973 war. Israeli industry also developed *Gabriel* missiles with an extended range of 20-30 miles and better accuracy;[230] these developments helped Israel in the limited naval operations during the war but could not provide any help in relieving the Egyptian blockade of Bab-Al-Mandeb strait.

Artillery and air-defences were far inferior to those of the Arabs in quantity and quality as they were seen merely as auxiliary forces, most of whose functions could be taken over by the air force as "flying artillery". As for air defences, it was thought that "the best way to fight against the plane is the plane".[231]

The IDF also had air-defence capability with the Hawks system, and a few Jericho surface-to-surface missiles; a project that was launched with French co-operation in 1962.

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[228] Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, *The Israeli Army, 1948-73* (London: Allen Lane, 1975) p.322 & pp.347-351; Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, p.220.

[229] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army, 1948-73*, p.316 & p.331; Fawzy, *Three Years War*, pp.301-304.

[230] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army, 1948-73,* p.392.

[231] Luttwak and Horowitz, *The Israeli Army, 1948-73,* p.392.

Adapting Fighting Power

In contrast to Israel's low quality in guiding the fighting power pre-war, the IDF showed a moderate, but effective degree of adaptability and recovery.

Meir Finkel developed a fascinating theory of **flexibility** which enhances the ability to recover from tactical, doctrinal and technical surprises. Finkel's study focused on the tactical/technical surprises on the battlefields and not the strategic, but he did not make the link clear between both types of surprise and recovery. It is important however to clarify this link. [232]

For example, if a war like the 1973 War has both types of surprises, they will have a combined effect. But recovery depends on the strategic ability to mobilize quickly and to formulate salvage or retarding strategy to give the IDF a breathing space to reorient the military situation and generate a counter-strategy on one side, and operational and tactical solutions on the other. These solutions may involve changing the hardware of the army; its fighting power as well as its operational planning and execution, and its software. Although the first task is harder and very risky, it is not feasible unless the military system is intrinsically adaptable and a learning institution.

Remodelling fighting ability may result from the change of strategic orientation; Nagel's study on counter-insurgency[233], or the operational and tactical; Finkel. In the Israeli case, both were needed and were achieved to some extent, but here we need to address the second issue of operational and tactical flexibility.

Finkel formulated **four pillars**[234] needed for adaptability to recover from doctrinal and technical shock. The first is conceptual and doctrinal which entails flexible doctrines open to critical analysis and review with readiness to learn from foreign doctrine, and multi-dimensional in nature; this was the major failing of the IDF.[235]

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[232] Finkel, *On Flexibility: Recovery from Technological and Doctrinal Surprise on the Battlefield.*

[233] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005)

[234] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, pp.53-60.

The second is organisational and technological and involves generating forces with balanced structure and flexible weaponry systems. The balance of forces is achieved by creating and maintaining a balance between fighting and manoeuvre elements, a balance between offensive and defensive elements and fighting and support elements. Flexible weaponry is achieved by having a diverse and flexible industrial complex. Again, this was another negative point for the IDF due to its doctrinal biases, but the Israeli industrial complex played a positive role by keeping a close eye on the evolving requirements of battlefields, deciphering the technical parameters of SAMs and providing some solutions.[236]

The third pillar was command decentralization and innovation; in which the IDF achieved a highly successful record. Tactical commanders quickly identified the dangerous order of battle biased to armour and sought more balanced forms.[237] Also, tactical air commanders developed invading and hitting techniques to deal with SAM-6s, especially on the Syrian front.[238]

The fourth pillar is a mechanism of generating and disseminating lessons learned, and the IDF showed a modest ability in this area due to the lack of organised platforms for this role.[239]

With such a moderate adaptability of the IDF, the ability to recover from the early shock was feasible, albeit over a longer than desirable time frame. Also, the Egyptian mistakes in strategy and operational art in the second half of the war helped the recovery by giving a wider window and accelerating its operational and strategic effect. For example, Dan's *ugda* in the west, which were joined later by Magan and Sharon's, were fighting in open theatre mostly against the managerial and logistical sites of 3rd Army and loosely defendable SAM battalions.

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[235] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, pp.150-179.

[236] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, pp.150-179.

[237] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, pp.150-179.

[238] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, pp.150-179.

[239] Finkel, *On Flexibility*, pp.150-179.

The overall assessment of the Israeli practical layer may be characterised as showing lower **moderate ability** overall. Unclear policy and poor pre-war strategy formulation and guiding fighting power contrast with excellent adaptability in both, benefiting from unintended external and internal factors.

This grade of practical tier is **higher than expected** from a low conceptual and lower medium institutional. Two possible reasons for this phenomenon may be identified. Firstly, as the discussion above showed, Israel commenced the war with poor strategy; more reflective to her conceptual and institutional abilities. However, only with the Egyptian strategic awkwardness, a window for reviewing and exploitation arose. Secondly, US intervention in the war leashing the "natural" Israeli high obsession of operational decisiveness played very positive role at the strategic level.

The Outcome of War

The question of what political gains emerged from the ending of the 1973 War is complex and has been prone to partisan manipulation, competing estimates and heterogeneous levels of analysis for more than four decades.

Sources of complexity include what was forecast in the Introduction in addition to the specific peculiarities of the 1973 War.

Firstly, as has been described, there were **vague political, long and short, aims** for both sides, contested proposals for political resolution inside the Israeli cabinet, not to mention the rise to power of the Right. However, by utilising our methodological solution, the **formal political aims** of Egypt were to regain the Arab occupied territories lost in 1967 and reach a "just" solution for Palestinian refugees, and for Israel keeping the status quo for the short term which could entail annexing the occupied territory or, less likely, achieving an advantageous peace over the long term with dramatic border changes on all fronts, including Sinai.

Political leaders asked the military to achieve **specific strategic objectives**; for the Egyptian Army to smash the "national security doctrine" of Israel and to occupy and consolidate a strip on the East Bank of the Suez Canal to act as an advantage in future negotiations, and for Israel to defend occupied territory, keep its qualitative military edge and annihilate any and all advancing Arabs forces with further occupation of territory in order to deter any subsequent offensive and consolidate its territorial successes.

Secondly, we may judge the outcome from the perspective of strategic objectives: both armies achieved their objectives in part with perhaps a greater success enjoyed by the Egyptians.

The foundations of the Israeli security concept anchored on arrogance and disdain for the Arab ability to fight were undermined but not completely destroyed due to the ultimate operational outcome and the successful counter-crossing. Nevertheless, the honour of the Arabs was restored six years after a humiliating defeat.

On the other hand, Sadat felt **more compelled** to peace, or disengagement, than Israel partly because of the nature of the personal and regional gamble he had taken, but also due to the encirclement of Suez City and the 3rd Army which might destroy his publicized image of victor.

However, Israel also was compelled to peace; pressure from the US as a payoff for Israeli dependence on it which had bolstered her battlefield superiority,[240] the sense that escalation would be useless and only invite a Soviet intervention, and operational necessity.

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[240] Avi Kober, "Great Power Involvement and Israeli Battlefield Success in the Arab Israeli Wars, 1948-1982", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2006, pp.20-48.

With the Cold War dynamics (USSR ultimatum and US strategic alert), both powers were interested in de-escalation in addition to the point that encircling the 3rd Army was seen internationally as illegal as it was done after violating 3 UN resolutions for ceasefire, the last two ordering the belligerent forces explicitly to go back to 22 October positions.

Militarily, IDF operational superiority was far from being determined. The corridor to its 3 armoured divisions in the west bank of Suez (enemy territory) was narrow and not viable for long. The shift from encirclement to annihilating the Egyptian 3rd Army was no doubt achievable but only at an unacceptable cost, according to Israeli parameters, in human losses, especially with Egyptian deployment of 2 armoured divisions to the west of Israeli forces by 28 October.[241] To sum up: the coercive power of the Israeli operational advantage, the currency convertor of operational superiority to the enemy's calculation and sense of security, was much less than expected in the absence of the aforementioned political and operational restrictions.

However, the most compelling factor for Israeli de-escalation and openness to negotiation was the *psychological shattering* in the opening of war and the *failure of the security concept* both of which convinced the Israeli cabinet that the pre-war strategic orientation would neither lead to deterrence nor security.

The Israeli leadership did not recover completely from these effects even with the subsequent operational achievements. As Meir said in her memoirs, "the war was a near disaster, a nightmare that I myself experienced, and which will always be with me…I found myself as Prime Minister in a position of ultimate responsibility at a time when the state faced the greatest threat it had known".[242] The *feeling of insecurity and improbable victory*, adding to the losses that they were sensitive to, were the strategic effects that Egyptians aimed to achieve, and these they did, if only in part.

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[241] A CIA report analysing the war had reached a similar conclusion, "the question of cease-fire violations aside, the fact is that war ended in a military inconclusive note. The Israelis had managed to place the Egyptian forces in Sinai in a bad position, but the Egyptians had not yet been defeated. The Egyptian Armies maintained their organization and were still well equipped and prepared to defend themselves. There is little doubt they would fight for more time and that an Israeli effort to destroy the Egyptian Army would have a costly business". CIA Intelligence Report, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: Overview and Analysis of the Conflict*, September 1975 (Released in 2012).

This ***relative superiority for Egypt***, was visible in the Disengagement I in comparison to the pre-war deployment, whereby Israeli forces withdrew from the west bank of the Suez Canal and Egypt reduced its presence on the east bank to nominal forces and drew back her SAMs. This situation was clearly more advantageous to Egypt than that before the war. Much of this advantage, however, was lost during the subsequent negotiations due to Sadat's poor diplomacy which yielded more concessions than Kissinger and the Israelis expected.

However, in the long run, Israel achieved a grand-strategic advantage; she could not achieve border changes in Sinai, but Sinai became mostly de-militarized; and, more importantly, Egyptians, the core enemy for nearly three decades, *were out of the conflict* militarily through a peace, albeit a cold one. Egypt also achieved some political gains by regaining Sinai. However, this **long term political outcome should not be considered directly** here. Although its materialization was helped off course by the war and the perception of players of its outcomes, it was more shaped by the diplomatic marathon between 1974 and 1982 and the accompanying rifts between Sadat and his followers.

Thirdly, another source of complexity was related to the dynamics of limited wars that are followed by exhausting diplomatic processes where **the perceptions of the military outcomes and the strategic assumptions of possible re-escalation are manipulated** by all players including the belligerents and the mediators.

Therefore, there should be no astonishment in finding how dissimilar were the military and political assessments between players, and even inside the same camp, as such differences were motivated not only by differing conceptions of the national agenda but also acted as a platform to advance, or defend, personal, ideological and institutional positions **domestically**.[243]These "subjective" inputs may be minimized by applying more rigorous and critical methods and respecting the level of analysis and the time frames mentioned above, but they will never be avoided as long as humans are involved in the process.

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[242] Golda Meir, *My Life*, (London: Futura Publications, 1976) p.353.

Also, comparing the post-war national images and domestic consequences shows illustrative points. In Egypt, the *"October Victory"* was iconized in the national discourse and memory. "Sinai was returned" became a slogan devoid of any complex or deep understanding in the education, social and media discourses. Nevertheless, generally the injured honour of Egypt was restored both inside the country and in the wider Arab world, albeit at the cost of significant casualties (5000 killed and 12000 injured)[244].

Any criticism of the war or even meaningful investigation of its political and military processes were condemned and marginalized. For example, the great hero of the war, General Shazly, was sentenced to three years imprisonment, after a period of political enmity and slanderous accusations by Sadat's regime, on the charge of "revealing national security information" in his account of "the crossing". His repeated requests for an inquiry into the war to establish who was responsible for its setbacks were ignored.[245]

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[243] For example, Syrians and Egyptian Nationalists condemned Sadat who 'stabbed the Egyptian Army in the back' and wasted its operational victories. Shazly emphasised this and unravelled the operational ordeal of the Egyptian Army in the second half of the war and blamed Sadat's intervention. Howeidi gave a more comprehensive account strategically. Gamasy and formal military positions underestimated the Israeli achievements heavily and followed Sadat in claiming an operational victory with the Israeli breakthrough being a "show". Gamal Hammad explained the operational ordeal but, unlike his thorough treatment of the 1973 operations, he just mentioned swiftly the Shamel plan without reaching a conclusion. Traditional Israeli historians portrayed the operational outcome as a "decisive" victory. Other critics, such as Handel, Bar-Joseph, Kober and new historians, highlighted the strategic ordeal in the beginning of the war and gave modest accounts of the Israeli operational advantage in the end. American and European accounts generally transmitted both points of view, but some sided with one or another: Dupuy to the Egyptians, Pollack to the Israelis, Cordesmann in between, and some such as Gawrych and Brooks appraised Sadat's superior strategy that led to success despite the militarily disadvantaged outcome. Edgar O'Ballance made a balanced estimate that did not recognize any belligerent to achieve either a military decision or a political victory in the short term; hence he indicated that the (no peace - no war) that shadowed the pre-war period became **(no victor – no vanquished)** afterwards**.** Edgar O'Ballance, *No Victor No Vanquished: The Arab Israeli War, 1973* (New York: Presidio Press, 1997).

[244] Eliot A. Cohen, *Knives, Tanks and Missiles: Israel's Security Revolution,* (Washington: Institute for Near East Policy*, 1998*).

In Israel, the situation was different. Although the standard narrative claimed a military victory which was limited only by American pressure, in retrospect there was satisfaction with its peaceful outcome, Israel suffered psychological and human costs unprecedented since 1948 (2527 killed and 5596 wounded)[246]. The Knesset investigated the war seriously to find the origins of the government's mistakes. The Agranat Commission was established even before Disengagement I, and performed a very thorough estimate of all aspects. Its "open" conclusion put the responsibility of the first day's nightmare on the shoulders of the military, especially Aman, and skipped the politicians. [247]

To comply with the Agranat recommendations regarding rationalising civil-military relations, the Basic Laws were sanctioned in 1974 to put the military formally under the direct scrutiny of both the executive and legislative branches.

Causal link tracing for this war presents a **low advantageous practical ability for Egypt** (medium Egyptian ability versus lower medium Israeli ability) that resulted in **low relative Superiority for Egypt.** This relative superiority is derived from a moderate achievement of Egypt's strategic objectives (but not its political aims) versus low Israeli achievement. Also, Egypt restored its honour and had a privileged post-war military deployment in comparison to before the war. Although Israel achieved a grand strategic success on the long run versus low Egyptian achievement, this wasn't planned for and was a fruit of an almost disconnected long post-war diplomatic pathway. For the purpose of this research, as was explained in the introduction, the long-term grand strategic achievement is not considered a primary measure of war winning, but only as a secondary measure as the military outcome of 1973 War, or rather its perception, was still a working factor in the diplomatic pathway preceding the 1979 Peace Accords.

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[245] Shazly interview with Al-Jazeera Channel (June 1999).

[246] Shazly interview with Al-Jazeera Channel (June 1999).

[247] Agranat Commission of Inquiry Interim Report (April 1974) http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.1223929

With a slightly higher comparative strategic practical ability (upper medium for Egypt and lower medium for Israel), this is almost congruent with the presumed causal link.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Arab-Israeli Irregular Wars

PLO, Hezbollah and Hamas

The Milestones of the Arab-Israeli Irregular Wars

The Search for Identity: Fatah-led PLO

As early as 1958, Fatah (The Palestinian Nationalist Liberation Movement) was founded by a small of group of young Palestinian nationalists and Islamists led by Yasser Arafat, who was a graduate of the Cairo Faculty of Engineering who was subsequently commissioned in the Palestine Liberation Organization in Egypt. Fatah promoted two principles in contrast to other Palestinian nationalist movements: the priority of the Palestinian liberation agenda over any other political or ideological affiliation, and not rallying behind any single Arab regime or participating in the regional rivalry.[1]

Before 1967, Fatah, and its military wing Al-Asifa (storm), participated only modestly in guerrilla warfare and regional politics. Its preferred strategy was utilizing border guerrilla war to **instigate** an **Arab-Israeli war**[2], which was expected to end in a decisive victory for the Arabs, by promoting a cycle of escalation and retaliation. In 1967, the war came but resulted in a humiliating defeat for the Arabs.

After 1967, Fatah benefited from the widespread desperation that filled both Arab and Palestinian communities and the rising popular mistrust of the role of Arab regimes in seeking the liberation of Palestine, after they had lost the rest of Palestine and large portions of their own territories. Fatah expanded in all directions: recruitment, new sources of funds, especially from the Gulf, military professionalism that was provided by the Syrians, and the establishment of military bases and operations on the Jordanian front.[3]

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[1] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp.27-34; Edgar O' Balance, *Arab Guerrilla Power 1967-1974* (London: Faber, 1974) p.30.

[2] O' Balance, *Arab Guerrilla Power*, pp.32-34.

[3] O' Balance, *Arab Guerrilla Power*, pp.32-34.

Just after the 1967 War, when the Gaza strip and the West Bank came under Israeli rule, Fatah attempted to imitate the Algerian model of **insurgency** but failed, as will be shown in the following section. It went back to the model of small **border wars** but with a much more mature structure, stronger and more frequent operations, and widely disseminated propaganda that exaggerated success stories.[4]

But the turning point, when Fatah became the accepted representative of the Palestinian military movements, was the Battle of Karameh (dignity) in July 1969. After successful attacks on civilian and military targets close to the Dead Sea, Israel sent two armoured brigades to neutralize a series of Fatah camps in Jordan. However, half of the armour was captured by the Jordanian army, and the rest faced heavy resistance from around 200 well-trained Fatah guerrillas, while up to 2,000 trainee recruits escaped. Israeli forces had to retreat with political, human and material losses[5]. Although Fatah fighters also suffered grave losses, the propaganda value was immense to the extent that Fatah's rival, King Hussein, praised it in his famous speech, "We are now becoming Fedayeen (guerrilla fighters)".[6]

Fatah utilized this success to gain control of the PLO, which by then had disposed of its first leader Ahmed Shukeiry. Fatah also fostered the formulation of the Palestinian National Covenant of 1968 which announced the necessity for the liberation of the whole of Mandate Palestine to establish a bi-national state without recognising Israel. It won the acceptance of Nasser and other Arab leaders, and widened influence in Jordan to an unprecedented extent.

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[4] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation,* pp.36-42; O' Balance, pp.49-70; Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp.174-194.

[5] Although the human losses were generally lower (around 30 Israelis killed, 61 Jordanians and 120 Palestinians) and there was somehow a form of tactical victory as the Karameh base was in Jordan and the Israelis stayed there searching for a few hours, but it was a strategic loss as described; (another Tet Offensive story to a much lesser extent)

[6] O'Balance, *Arab Guerrilla Power*, p.47.

However, conflict soon erupted in Jordan with small Syrian-supported movements that led to Black September in 1970 when the Jordanian Army attacked Palestinian military bases and camps until an agreement orchestrated by Nasser a few days before his death secured a mass PLO evacuation to Lebanon where in the south and the Beqa'a valley a new Palestinian stronghold known as *Fatahland* was established. Black September was a significant setback for the PLO, not only because of the 3,000 deaths and a greater number of wounded in a humiliating defeat, but also because of the loss of access to the longest viable front with Israel, and the inoperability of the Sinai front which it could have used to launch guerrilla operations or link with operations in the West Bank.

In the Lebanon era, three developments occurred: political, organisational and strategic. **Politically**, the Fatah-led PLO became the formal representative for the Palestinian cause regionally and to a large extent in the international arena, a status iconized by Arafat's speech to the UN in 1974. However, the PLO's attempts to benefit from the diplomatic surge after 1973 were halted mainly by the Kissinger-orchestrated US dismissal of their role and peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. As Israel aggressively opposed any US-PLO rapprochement[7] and was not prepared at all to compromise over the Palestinian issue, the formal US policy of boycotting the PLO unless it agreed to recognise Israel was not genuinely revisited in spite of frequent signals from the PLO that it would be willing to compromise.[8]

These offers of compromise included shifting the stated PLO political aims from destroying Israel to establishing a bi-national state for Arabs and Jews, to accepting a Palestinian authority on any de-occupied territory as laid out in the Ten Point Programme in 1974, to ultimately accepting the principle of an independent state in the de-occupied territory in the early 1980s.[9] However, these compromises failed to gain traction within the ongoing diplomatic processes.

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[7] Cobban*, The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, pp.235-238.

[8] Henry Kissinger, Years of Renewal (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999) pp.356-365.

Fatah also became a major player within Lebanon which suffered a civil war from 1975 onwards. Initially, Fatah sought to remain apart from the evolving savagery between the Maronites, as represented by the Lebanese Front, on one side and the Leftists, nationalists, Muslims, Druze and some PLO components such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on the other. However, after the massacre of Tal Al-Za'ater in 1976 and the fall of other Palestinians camps, Fatah entered the civil war but sought to play a mediating role such as when it played down the confrontations between the national movement and the Syrians who were seeking to control them.[10]

Organisationally, the PLO was widened to accommodate the leftist movements, including the PFLP which was the military wing of George Habash's Arab Nationalist Movement and was behind the terrorist hijacking campaign from 1968 to 1972. The PLO also developed its organisational structure to the status of a quasi-state and its funding was expanded to around $280 million annually. It aimed to establish a quasi-state status and capacity. Not only did it gain recognition from the UN as an observing member in 1974, but established sophisticated networks imitating an established state in military, security, economic, education and foreign policy.[11]

Fatah enhanced its leadership position in the PLO decision-making platforms such as the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the Executive Committee, but it was also forced to accommodate the views and actions of the PLO's other components as in the case of Black September and the Lebanese Civil War. Further, Fatah encountered stiff resistance to its diplomatic concessions and, in 1974, in response to the Ten Point Programme's gradualist approach, the PFLP and some smaller organisations formed what was called the Rejection Front which competed with Fatah's positions and preferences within the PLO until it was mostly exhausted in the civil war.

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[9] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, pp. 256-257; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp.683-686.

[10] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, pp.67-77.

[11] More details in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp.447-495.

Strategically, the PLO was in a deadlock. It was embroiled in the dilemma of civil war which required commitments for static defences and was faced by disproportionate Israeli retaliation in response to border activities. Attempts at involvement in the diplomatic process were largely fruitless. Later, the Palestinian cause experienced a shocking blow with Egypt's withdrawal from the Arab-Israeli conflict after separate peace with Israel which hugely tilted the balance of power towards Israel. With fractured and weak Arab states, and an organisation comprised of only 15,000 guerrillas, isolated from its natural popular base within Palestine, there was little room for strategic manoeuvre. The PLO military was transformed into a quasi-regular army with regular formations and weaponry, but it combined its bombardments/rocket firing campaigns with terrorist and commando raids inside Israel in addition to aiding the anti-Maronite military effort in Lebanon as part of the Joint Command.

In 1978, a commando group led by an 18-year-old girl, Dalal Maghrabi, undertook an amphibious operation near the Tel Aviv–Haifa Road, hijacking a civilian bus in order to negotiate the release of PLO prisoners. The failed Israeli operation to free the hostages led to 37 dead, including the six Palestinians. As a result, the IAF replied with massive air strikes on military and civilian targets in South Lebanon with 70 killed. A few days later, an air-land-sea invasion on South Lebanon aimed to widen the buffer zone northwards up to the Litani River. An international deal sanctioned a ceasefire and deployed UN emergency troops (UNIFIL) to pacify the area and assist the government in the exercise of its authority in the area, although this did not effectively happen until the 1990s.[12]

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[12] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, pp.95-97.

Cycles of minor escalations and reprisals followed in 1979 and 1980. But in 1981, a crisis erupted due to a Maronite attempt to threaten the rear of the Syrian deployment in Beqa'a. Syria deployed batteries of SAM-6 missiles which Israel considered as threatening its intelligence and retaliatory capability over Lebanon. Mediation by the US- envoy Philip Habib calmed the situation but tensions rose again after Israeli air strikes on South Lebanon PLO military installations and UNRWA refugee camps in south Lebanon. For the first time, the PLO replied with severe bombardment and rocket attacks rained down on northern Galilee which Israel could not stop until a formal ceasefire was reached.

This was the first time that such a formal deal had been made between Israel and the PLO and it was seen as a clear sign of deterioration in the Israeli deterrent capability.[13] As a result, the PLO began to be recognised as a more legitimate international player, and the possibility of its integration into future peace processes was very alarming to the Israelis.[14] Plans were forged for a military intervention aiming to clear the PLO strongholds in south Lebanon.

In 1982, after a terrorist attack that wounded the Israeli ambassador in London, for which the PLO denied responsibility, the time came for such an operation, especially with the election of a triumphant Likud government headed by Menachem Begin and the signing of the peace agreement with Egypt. However, the limited retaliatory operation announced initially that aimed to clear around 25 km, the range of Palestinian *Katyusha* rockets north of the Lebanese border, was transformed by Sharon's aggressive and careless calculation into a major war and the occupation of Beirut. A new phase in the Arab-Israeli conflict commenced.[15]

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[13] Rashid Khalidi, *Under Siege: PLO Decision-Making During the 1982 War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014) pp.36-41.

[14] Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp.89-90.

[15] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.289-291.

The Israeli plan envisioned an attack by six divisions supported by a seaborne brigade. Two invaded Lebanon and rushed up the coast to Sidon. Another two converged on Sidon from the central zone. The last two divisions invaded the Beqa'a valley to neutralize the PLO hub there, but with ambiguous orders whether to engage the Syrian army stationed there.[16] In contrast to the 1978 campaign, the IDF was not merely pushing the frontal PLO defences backwards, but was aiming for a penetrating blitzkrieg campaign where bypassing and exploitation, then mobbing out, was the part of the plan.[17]

But what was anticipated as a swift thrust to encircle Beirut, applying a surprising shock to the PLO after securing the coastal road, the only possible route to sustain the heavy logistics of encircling Beirut, ended in a protracted campaign. The coastal thrust succeeded in reaching Sidon and converged with the amphibious land at the Awali River, but the nearby Ein Al-Helwe camp was too much of a threat to the logistical supply line to be left alone. Five days of heavy urban fighting and bombardment had to take place before it was pacified with serious civilian and military casualties.[18]

The central thrust was also delayed at the stronghold of Arqoub, and then converged at Sidon. The combined forces thrust to the northwards but were held for more than a week at the Khaledya–Daroum junction south of Beirut. Only the eastern thrust achieved its mission easily and reached the Shouf Mountains overlooking the Beqa'a valley as there were no PLO forces but Druze there. Although the thrust failed to encircle the Syrians to push them into retreat, an air-land battle in Beqa'a ended in a Syrian defeat with the loss of 100 planes over two days and was followed by the Syrian forces' withdrawal.[19]

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[16] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, pp.289-291.

[17] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation,* p.120

[18] Khalidi, *Under Siege,* pp.72-77.

[19] John Warden, *The Air Campaign*: *Planning for Combat* (Indiana: iUniverse, 2011) p.61.

In Beirut, protracted urban irregular warfare began with Israeli forces supported by moral bombing which led to huge casualties, mostly civilians, but the IDF was conceptually and materially challenged too. After seven weeks of siege and air/ground raids, the PLO still held territory, although reduced to an eight-mile pocket in East Beirut. In contrast to the awkward strategy and military preparation in south Lebanon, Beirut was well prepared with mine fields, strong points and command and logistical networks. The delays in the IDF advance had also given time for the PLO to accumulate reserves, including a large portion of its overrun southern fighters. [20]

A political resolution was reached under which the PLO quit Lebanon with its arms for safe haven in Tunisia and Lebanon held early presidential elections. A formal international and American guarantee of the safety of civilians after the PLO withdrawal was issued. Tragically, as the horrible massacres in Sabra and Shatila camps showed, this guarantee was not respected by the IDF's allies, the Christian Lebanese Forces led by Samir Ga'ga', with disputed IDF collusion. [21]

Multinational forces from the US, France and Italy were stationed in Lebanon to guard the implementation of the deal. Bashir Gemayel, who led the Phalangist (Kataeb) Party, won the presidential election but was assassinated soon after.

After leaving Lebanon for Tunisia the PLO spent the following years in more political and organisational works, especially by extending its networks in the Occupied Territories and supporting the Intifada uprising in 1987. After losing some of its hardliners in Israeli commando and covert campaigns, and facing the dilemma of being a resistance movement without a front, the PLO began diplomatic initiatives to translate the outcomes of the Intifada into political assets. At the same time, as the

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[20] Khalidi, *Under Siege,* pp.87-98.

[21] Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, pp.128-130; Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security,* pp.156-158.

Intifada reached its culminating point in 1988, the PLO changed the Palestinian National Charter to recognise Israel and permit negotiation of a two-state solution.[22]

The PLO had lost a great deal of its funding from the Gulf after it supported Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and the collapse of the USSR also meant the loss of its major political and military support. In response to these dramatic changes, the PLO became more open to peace initiatives through reaching a rapprochement with the Mubarak regime in Egypt. Israel was also ready to negotiate in order to get rid of the burden of the Intifada and widen normalization of relations with the Arabs.[23]

The Oslo Accords signed in 1993 permitted a temporary platform for a Palestinian Autonomous Authority in the West Bank and Gaza while the conditions for solid peace were negotiated and built. The *Wadi Araba* peace agreement was also signed with Jordan in 1994. From that date, the PLO was effectively subordinate to the Palestinian Authority led by Fatah, and only represented a secondary platform for political manoeuvring domestically and regionally.

Born with Invasion and Shia Revival: Hezbollah

Guerrilla warfare against Israel did not end after the PLO retreat from Lebanon but was continued by new Sunni and Shia organisations in Lebanon.[24] The most important and effective of these was Hezbollah. Faced with increasing losses in Lebanon from 1982 to 1985, which reached 670 casualties, Israel withdrew from the environs of Beirut to a southern "security zone", an area in the south the depth of 12 km at Hamra in the west and 15-40 km wide. The zone was ruled nominally by the forces of a puppet ally, the Christian South Lebanese Army (SLA) led by Saad Haddad with the IDF as the real ruler.

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[22] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp.638-643.

[23] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, pp.653-659.

[24] Some Sunnis affiliated to the Jamaa Islamya in Sidon organised what was called Fagr Troops, but in the 1990s they were funded and organised by Hezbollah. An interview with one of its founders (Beirut. 20 August 2008).

Although Hezbollah's birth was primarily a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, two other factors were influential: the Lebanese Shia revival and the Islamic Iranian Revolution.

Lebanese Shiites had been neglected politically and socially since the establishment of greater Lebanon in 1920. However, in the 1960s a major social and political revival commenced, led by Musa as--Sadr, a Shiite high jurist from a prominent Iraqi family. He established the *Mahromoon* (Movement of the Disinherited) as a social platform, and then created Amal (Lebanese Resistance Detachments) in response to the frequent Israeli border incursions. However, after Musa as-Sadr's mysterious disappearance in 1978 while visiting Libya, rifts appeared in Amal.[25]

A Shiite Islamist trend separated from Amal in 1982 in response to the involvement of Nabih Berri, Amal's new leader, in Lebanon's transitional political agreement. Amal was the main source of the emerging Hezbollah leadership and provided the new group with political and military training. [26] Among those who switched to Hezbollah was Hassan Nasrallah, who led Amal's south Lebanon sector.

The islamization of Lebanese Shia was enhanced from the second half of the 1970s by two major Ayatollahs, the highest Shiite jurist, Mohamed Hussein Fadlullah and Mohamed Shamsuddin. Religious relations were enhanced with Najaf and Qom, the major religious Shiite cities in Iraq and Iran, and with Ayatollah Khomeini's spiritual leadership. Once the Islamic Revolution erupted in Iran, the sense of revival and solidarity became stronger among religious Shiite elites in Lebanon.

With the Israeli invasion of Lebanon a group of Nine (3 from Islamic Amal, 3 from the followers of the two Ayatollahs, and 3 from the Da'awa party, the Shiite version of the Moslem Brotherhood) went to Tehran and received its blessing for establishing Hezbollah, and its military arm, the Islamic Resistance.[27] Syria permitted several thousand Iranian Republican Guards (the Iran state army) to be stationed at the Lebanese-Syrian border in case the war spread.

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[25] Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[26] Vali Nasr, The *Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2007)

However, once the war was settled, most of these forces went back to Iran apart from one or two thousand men who moved to Lebanon to build and train the new organisation. This hard nucleus oversaw the development of Hezbollah's military capabilities and command structure, and participated in military operations until 1989.[28]

Hezbollah broadcast its agenda in 1983, which was purely radical Islamist originating from Shiite ideology and strongly linked to Khomeini's Welayat Al-Faqih. It envisioned importing the Iranian Islamic Revolution to Lebanon to establish an Islamic state and participate in *jihad* against the Tyrants as represented by the Americans and the Israelis.[29] Nearly 25 years later it formulated a new agenda which kept the same pillars of Iranian and Shiite affiliation and resistance against Israel, but adopted a much milder formula in describing Lebanese politics and international relations, stating that its role was to foster creation of a multi-religious national and independent state with strong relations with Arab and Islamic nations.[30]

Hezbollah's relations with other Lebanese political groups were very heated in the early period. It considered the Maronites its enemy and Israel's allies, and was hostile towards the Sunnis and competed with Amal for supremacy within the Shiite community. However, supported by Iranian resources, Hezbollah widened its base and structure extensively as the struggle continued to an extent that open war erupted with Amal, which was supported by the Syrians, who were concerned by Hezbollah's swift rise from the late 1980s until 1991. However, Hezbollah's stance softened over time and after the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, it refrained from revenge attacks against the Maronites in the south, and in 2008 even signed an alliance with General Michel Aoun, a Maronite leader.[31]

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[27] Vali Nasr, The *Shia Revival*.

[28] Joshua Gleis and Benedetta Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas: A Comparative Study* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) p.39; Interviews with Hagg Muhtady, a former commander of the Southern Sector (Beirut – 19 August 2008) and Nawwaf Mussawi, External Relations Adviser to the General Secretary (Beirut-18 August 2008).

[29] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* pp.53-60.

[30] Gleis & Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, pp.53-60.

In 1992, Hezbollah's new leadership took the decision to participate in Lebanese political life which had resumed after the Ta'ef agreement ended Lebanon's civil war. This decision produced a rift among its leadership which was only relieved by the intervention of Ali Khamenei, the new Iranian Supreme Leader (*Morshid*).[32]

During this period, Hezbollah applied the classic strategy of insurgency in the south Lebanon "Security Zone". It gradually developed guerrilla warfare techniques ranging from shootings, improvised explosions and suicide attacks to more sophisticated operations against the SLA and Israeli strongholds. It undertook nearly 35 big operations and around 230 medium-sized operations in this period.[33] It simultaneously extended its recruitment base inside the Security Zone, but mainly outside it. It developed its social warfare and propaganda, and enhanced its intelligence links within the Shiite community in the zone though coercion, accommodation and indoctrination.

In 1992, Hezbollah's Secretary General Abbas Mussawi was assassinated by an Apache strike with his family and was replaced by Hassan Nasrallah. It responded to the assassination with a series of terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish interests in Latin America and Europe.[34]

The Israeli response came with Operation Accountability which lasted seven days from July 1993, and involved air-land-sea attacks on southern Lebanon to neutralize Hezbollah's military bases and command structure. However, Hezbollah launched thousands of katyusha rockets against Israel which paralysed Northern Galilee. An informal agreement was reached with American and Syrian intervention which entailed redrawing red lines against hitting civilian targets.[35]

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[31] Gleis & Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, pp.53-60, interview with Hagg Muhtady, Beirut 2008.

[32] Gleis & Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, pp.53-60, interview with Nawwaf Mussawi, Beirut-18 August 2008.

[33] Amin Mostafa, *Resistance in Lebanon 1984-2000*, in Arabic (Beirut: Dar Al Hady, 2003) pp. 200- 213.

[34] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* p.85.

Only three years after this agreement Israel attempted to crush Hezbollah with the massive Operation Grapes of Wrath. But Hezbollah launched more katyushas and the operation was halted after a UN safe haven for civilian refugees was attacked in the south Lebanon town of Qana. The two sides signed a formal agreement after the massacre.[36] After that, medium-range guerrilla and retaliatory actions persisted until Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000.

In addition to retaliatory measures Israel had attempted to establish competent governance in the security zone by enhancing the military and administrative capabilities of the SLA and isolating the population from Hezbollah's reach by accommodation, but principally by coercive measures.[37] Nevertheless, the drain of blood and treasure caused great resentment among Israeli population and political campaigns such as the Four Mothers Movement[38], were launched to press for quitting the Lebanese quagmire. Ehud Barak, leader of the Labour Party, put withdrawal from Lebanon at the top of his manifesto. Against the wishes of his military leadership, who requested delaying the withdrawal or waiting until a political agreement was signed with the Syrians, he ordered a unilateral and sudden withdrawal which Hezbollah portrayed as a holy victory.

The Israeli-Lebanese border became quiet from 2000 till 2006, when Hezbollah launched a kidnapping operation to seize hostages to be exchanged for its prisoners in Israel. Small Hezbollah units managed to infiltrate the laser-electronic border and blow up two Humvees; a Merkava tank that rushed to help was ambushed and two soldiers were kidnapped. The Israeli response was unprecedented -- a major war.

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[35] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, p.80-81; Sergio Catignani, 'Israeli counterinsurgency strategy and the quest for security in the Israeli-Lebanese conflict' in Clives Jones and Sergio Catignani, *Israel and Hezbollah: An asymmetric conflict in historical and comparative perspective* (London: Routledge, 2009) p.82.

[36] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, pp.80-81.

[37] An interview with Hagg Muhtady, (Beirut- 19 August 2008)

[38] Yegal Levy, *Israel's Materialist Militarism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007) pp.1-3.

Over 33 days, aiming to finally disarm Hezbollah, Israel launched a massive strategic air campaign against its leadership, command chains, logistical lines, social base and Lebanese infrastructure. The air attacks covered all Lebanon in an attempt to turn the government and population against Hezbollah.

Hezbollah replied on an unprecedented scale, launching hundreds of small to medium rockets daily that reached as far as Haifa and Tel Aviv. Its stubborn defensive holding operations prevented the frequent Israeli commando raids from occupying the resistance pockets, and its use of sophisticated weaponry such as Cornet laser-guided double-headed anti-tank missiles wrought havoc on the state-of-the-art Merkava tanks, destroying 34, while anti-ship C308 missiles destroyed the Israeli missile ship *Saer* off Sidon.[39]

The massive psychological effects of Hezbollah's actions on the Israeli leadership and population and regional and international opposition to the Israeli attacks on civilians and Lebanese infrastructure led toa deal being arranged before the build-up of ground operations. Both sided agreed to UN resolution 1701 which ordered a ceasefire and the positioning of UN forces up to the Litani River.

The war resulted in around 1071 Lebanese killed (a third of whom were children) and 4000 wounded and 157 Israelis killed (40 civilians) and around 5000 wounded, with huge economic costs for both sides ($2 billion and $5 billion respectively).[40] Hezbollah was again able to portray itself as the holy victor and the guardian of Lebanon, and became highly popular among the wider Arab population, although it was criticized to some extent among Lebanese Sunnis and Christians for inciting the war and continuing to build its rocket arsenal. [41] A formal Israeli committee of investigation (the Winograd Commission) called the war a failure.[42]

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[39] Anthony Cordesman and William Sullivan, *Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War* (Washington DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2007).

[40] Gilbert Achcar and Michel Warchawski, *The 33 Day War: Israel's War on Hezbollah in Lebanon and its Aftermath* (London: Al Saqi Books, 2007) pp. 100-102.

Born with Two Intifadas: Hamas

The origins of Hamas go back to the establishment of the Moslem Brotherhood in Gaza in 1945.[43] Under Nasser's regime, the group's activities were repressed in Gaza but were generally eased in the West Bank under the Jordanians who were in alliance with the Moslem Brotherhood. Members of the group were among the early founders of Fatah (known as the Gulf Group), and wider participation of Moslem Brotherhood members was arranged in PLO camps in Jordan after 1967 in what were known as Scholars Camps.[44]

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader and founder of Hamas, was exposed to Moslem Brotherhood ideology while studying in Cairo in the 1960s. After returning to Gaza, he launched missionary (da'awa) and social works and was critical of participating in an armed struggle against Israel from outside, and without building a solid social base in the Occupied Territories.[45]

During the late 1970s, Yassin exploited the Israeli relaxation towards Islamic missionary work in the Occupied Territories as the Shin Bet was convinced that Islamists would compete with Fatah for support among the population. He established a system of social networks while continuing his efforts to develop the secret organisational networks of the Moslem Brotherhood in Gaza.[46]

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[41] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* pp.84-84 & 91-92; Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War Through Western Eyes* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers, 2009) pp. 184-188.

[42] The Official English Summary of the Winograd Report (Press Release-2007)

[43] Hamas: Historical Background and Covenant, 2009 (Arabic) – Edited by Abdullah Azzam (Beirut- Arabic Publishing, 2009)

[44] Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's interviews with Al-Jazeera Channel, (broadcasted on 22 September 1999).

[45] Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's interviews with Al-Jazeera Channel, (broadcasted on 22 September 1999).

The MB got stronger and, as was expected, frequently quarrelled with the PLO over control of social and educational organisations in Gaza and the West Bank. However, two leaders, Dr Fathi Al-Sheqaqi and Sheikh Abdul-Malik Auda, who were critical of the organisation's policy of delaying armed struggle to allow for the purification of society, established Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)[47] as an offshoot of the organisation.[48]

The PIJ was influenced by the Iranian Islamic Revolution and competed with the MB in the same social strata. But when the 1987 Intifada erupted, the MB leadership realised how dangerous lack of active participation[49] would be to its survival, and established Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine) and published its charter in 1988.

The charter adopted the ideology of the MB and considered Hamas its resistance wing in Palestine. It reiterated the aims of establishing an Islamic state from the Jordan River to the Sea as a part of the Islamic *khelafa* (Caliphate). However, it also highlighted the national agenda and was very accommodating to the other secular and Islamic organisations in Palestine, including the PLO and the PIJ.[50]

In 1991, Hamas founded its military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam. It carried out a few minor attacks in what it called the *knives* campaign and some kidnappings. [51] It used this watershed period to develop its internal structures and external and internal relations. In contrast to the PLO, which lost much of its Gulf support with the Kuwait War, Hamas, together with the wider MB movement, condemned Hussein's invasion as well as the Western intervention in Kuwait. Hence, most of the Gulf resources shifted after the war from the PLO to Hamas.

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[46] Interesting accounts for this period were mentioned in: Moshav Tekuma, "How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas", *Wall Street Journal*, January 24, 2009. To a major extent these were confirmed, albeit implicitly, by Sheikh Yassin in his interviews.

[47] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* pp.109-110.

[48] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* pp.109-110.

[49] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, pp.118-119.

[50] Hamas's Covenant.

[51] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* p.120.

Hamas also established good relations with Iran in 1992 and opened an office in Tehran a year later. Iranian funding reached around $30 million annually.[52] With these resources Hamas could extend and develop its social networks which included mosques, hospitals, social welfare and educational institutions, including a university.

Hamas and the PIJ, as well as the radical leftists such as the PFLP, did not recognize the Oslo Accords and so did not participate in the ongoing negotiations. After the massacre at the Ibrahaimi Mosque (Cave of the Patriarch) in Hebron in 1994 by an Israeli terrorist which left 70 victims among the worshippers, Hamas launched a suicide bombing campaign against Israeli civilian targets. After the assassination of this campaign's organiser, Yehia Ayyash, by Israel, another campaign followed in 1995. Between 1995 and 2000, relations between Hamas and the new Palestinian Authority led by Fatah deteriorated and many Hamas cadres were arrested. However, Hamas orchestrated its terrorist attacks inside Israel carefully to precede and spoil the negotiating steps that were to follow the Oslo Accords.

After the failure of the Camp David negotiations between Arafat and Netanyahu over the issue of Jerusalem in July 2000, the situation became tenser. Three months later after a planned visit by Sharon to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Second Intifada erupted. While the first Intifada was mostly civilian in nature and not organised until late, the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 was heavily militarized and was organised by a handful of Palestinian military organisations, including Hamas, the PIJ, PFLP and new Fatah offshoots: the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and Popular Resistance Committees. Yasser Arafat was unable to restrain the Palestinian actions, especially in the face of the extensive Israeli incursions against civilians in addition to its attacks on the militants.[53]

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[52] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* p.121.

Israeli public opinion was shifting to the right during this period, partly in response to a new wave of suicide attacks in Israeli cities. Faced with better fighters with better training and morale, the IDF adopted unrestrained techniques during Operation Defensive Wall in 2002 to avoid heavy losses among its own soldiers; these included "hollowing explosion" techniques and aerial strategic bombing.[54]

Another result was the destruction of the Palestinian Authority infrastructure and Arafat's detention in his Moqata'a until his controversial death in 2004, since Israel accused him of being a funder and organiser of the second Intifada in spite of his condemnation of many of its actions. Sheikh Yassin, the quadriplegic spiritual leader of Hamas, was also killed in an Apache attack in 2005, which increased public support for Hamas. Hence, Hamas's power was increasing vis-à-vis Fatah due to the above factors and also because of what was considered its successful reading of the situation, and a sense of the inferiority of Fatah's negotiation pathway in comparison to the Muqawama (armed resistance) model taken by Hamas.

When Ariel Sharon came to power in 2005, he proposed unilateral disengagement with Gaza, which included decommissioning its few settlements, emphasising the maintenance of a security grip in the West Bank (in contravention of the Oslo Accords), and building a Separation Wall which would isolate Palestinian population areas to safeguard Israelis against terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, Hamas and other Palestinian groups considered the Israeli withdrawal a victory.

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[53] Richard Goldstone's report for the UN General Assembly, "The Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" (*Human Rights Council*, 12th Session, Agenda Item 7, 25 September 2009).

[54] "Hollowing explosion" is a method of urban fighting by tunnelling through the houses in a crowded city by using well distributed explosions. Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso Books, 2012); Yotam Feldman, "Dr Naveh, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Walk Through Walls", *Haaretz* 25 November 2007.

In 2006, Egypt's Mubarak and Mahmoud Abbas, the new Fatah, PLO and PA leader, attempted to convince Israel, with American pressure, to permit Hamas's participation in Palestinian General Elections as a way to moderate the organisation's behaviour. However, Hamas won a surprise victory and established a Government. The enmity between Hamas and Fatah exploded and ended with the Hamas military taking over the Gaza Strip in 2007. Both sides in Gaza and the West Bank applied extensive repression against the other side's infrastructure and affiliation. Attempts to broker reconciliation in Mekka, Sana'a, Cairo, and Doha repeatedly failed.

As Hamas became responsible for almost 2 million people in the Gaza Strip and was keen to keep its rule going, it developed a new strategic behaviour. Internationally, Hamas had to align itself with the regional axis of Iran and Syria for finance and military aid, and to keep a viable relationship with Egypt in spite of its attitude in closing the tunnelling networks between Gaza and Sinai.

However, with the emergence of popular uprisings during the "Arab Spring" in which Hamas supported moves towards a new regional order controlled by Moslem Brotherhood sections in power, it shifted its policy against Syria and became more involved with Egyptian affairs. The short-lived nature of the Moslem Brotherhood's uprising meant Hamas had to face seriously negative consequences, especially facing an increasingly hostile Egyptian regime.

Domestically, Hamas had to face the same challenges as Fatah in ruling a truncated and isolated area. It wielded a harsh hand to prevent dissent and although it quickly reversed its early attitude towards the islamization of social life, it was not tolerant of any political or military organisations, especially Fatah. Of the other Islamic organisations such as the PIJ and Salafist Jihadists, the former were critical of Hamas's self-restraint towards Israel and aggressive attitude towards Fatah, and the latter were upset by Hamas's moderation towards both Israel and social islamization. Both organisations were kept under strict control.

The armed struggle with Israel became limited to cyclic escalation and extended intervals of calm. The first big campaign after 2008-9 was operation Cast Lead[55], as Hamas did not accept a renewal of the ceasefire with Israel unless it was extended to the West Bank and Israel lifted the maritime and ground blockade in place since 2006 when the Hamas government rejected the conditions of the Quartet[56].

The Israeli cabinet, with Ehud Olmert as Prime Minister, Tsibi Livney as Foreign Minister and Ehud Barak as Defence Minister, proclaimed an over-optimistic aim of disarming Hamas, and the IDF launched a massive air-sea-ground campaign. Much of the Gaza Strip infrastructure was demolished and some Hamas high officials were killed or attacked before the Israelis withdrew. However, the ground operation faced unexpected resistance, similar to the 2006 Hezbollah model, and rockets were launched against Israeli territory until the end. An Egyptian-mediated agreement re-established the ceasefire in Gaza and mildly relaxed the blockade.

Another escalation occurred in 2012 with Israel's operation Pillar of Defence[57] after it assassinated the Hamas military leader in Gaza, Ahmed Ja'bary, who was considered responsible for kidnapping Shalit and firing rockets. This time the Israeli cabinet set the modest aim of repairing deterrence. An aerial campaign of destruction was answered by Hamas firing rockets, which were now capable of reaching Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. However, an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire was reached again before ground operation got underway and both sides claimed victory.

A similar episode[58] occurred in 2014 with Israel assassinating Hamas leaders and retaliatory rocket firing that was more extensive in range and quantity. The IDF ordered partial mobilization and a limited ground operation occurred on the Gaza periphery to prevent Palestinian tunnel attacks against Negev settlements. The campaign left 2,190 Palestinians killed (1523 were believed to be civilians, including 519 children)[59] and 72 Israelis killed (6 were civilians)[60].

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[55] It was called by Hamas: Operation Furqan (demarcating victory).

[56] The US, Russia, the UN and the EU.

[57] It was called by Hamas and the PIJ: Operation Stones of Baked Clay (Hijarat Sejjil).

[58] It was called by Israel: Operation Protective Edge.

After a painstaking negotiation process, a similar deal to 2012 was reached. Both sides, especially Hamas, claimed victory, but the Israeli domestic population was highly disturbed as it had expected a more decisive result, especially since an operation proclaimed as repairing deterrence led to extensive evacuation of Israeli settlements in the Negev within range of Gaza rockets. In Gaza, the Hamas victory demonstrations also failed to conceal popular bitterness over the massive civilian losses.

Remarks on the Arab Irregular Strategic Ability

As the above concise narrative might show, the wars between Israel and Arab irregulars were uneven due to geography, socio-political, regional and international, ideologies, military strategies and outcomes. But were they also uneven in the ability of irregular forces to identify these characteristics and mould their strategic structure and conduct to reach their policy end?

Conceptual

The PLO, and its members, had the greatest ability to identify the nature of their struggle and its required strategy in a theoretical, if not sophisticated, manner. This can be seen in the dozens of central research groups, strategy and planning centres, regular and special periodicals for each movement. The ideological background of the PLO movement affected this theorizing capability and the adopted theories. Ideological factions, both leftist and, to a lesser extent, nationalist, were generally more focused on theory in comparison to Fatah which described itself mostly in more pragmatic and narrow nationalist terms.

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[59] Weekly Report of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs, 17 October 2014.

[60] BBC News, “Gaza crisis: Toll of Operation in Gaza”, 1 September 2014.

However, two maladies infected PLO theorizing and aggravated each other. All movements were influenced to some extent, even Fatah, by Mao's and Guevara's theories. Fatah was closer to the Algerian model as it was based on simple nationalism rather than ideological social reformations. However, there was a lack of thoroughness in generating a theoretical model respecting Mao's descending generality: theory of war, theory of peoples' war and theory of Palestinian peoples' war.

Although most acknowledged to some extent the contextual variances[61], they did not appreciate how massive these differences were, or their impacts. They had no solid base inside the occupied territory, no stable and genuine regional support. They shared the radical political aim of destroying Israel, at least until 1974, but this was beyond the scope of irregular warfare as explained in chapter four. The military and political imbalance between Israel and the Arab regional state system, and the almost universal international support for the viability of Israel, even from the Eastern Bloc, were also important factors.

The second problem was that the generation of theory was subject to its use as propaganda and to intra-PLO rivalries. As Sayigh indicated, the PLO movements, especially before 1970, kept shifting the utility of their theoretical arsenal[62] to make grandiose claims regarding their practical achievements without describing the reality of their situation or achievements.

The previous deficiency may be more attributed to the inability to formulate a practical strategy matching ends, means, and ways, but it lay also in the use of ill-defined concepts. For example, the border skirmishes were hailed by the PLO as the core of their people's war but in fact the models they used did not apply in cases where the guerrilla movement seeks bases in states that are hostile to them; a theoretical fallacy noted by Harkabi.[63]

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[61] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp.196-202.

[62] For example, how Fatah and the PFLP described modest guerrilla achievements as shifting from the first stage of people's war: preparation, to the guerrilla stage, to holding territory and the balancing stage. The basic concepts in Maoist and Guevara's theories of "sanctuary" were used inaccurately as well to describe the Occupied Territory sometimes, or Jordan at another times.

Addressing the utility of force in a more generic model and trying to build their theory of victory might have been more fruitful. Hence, externally generated theoretical models of a people's war or guerrilla war may have hindered the strategic development of a fresh PLO contribution to the general theory of war and strategy and applying it to the specific context.

Hezbollah had a more modest approach to theory. Although its founders were familiar with the strategic theories of a people's war and guerrilla war, since many were former members of Amal and some were even PLO cadres, the general trend was inherited from the Iranian theory which favoured pragmatism. Hezbollah did not generate theories of struggle, as was the PLO, but its strategic pathways were mostly the product of painstaking practice.[64] Nevertheless, the Hezbollah leadership did understand and use the basic, but highly valuable, strategic concepts such as the difference between strategy and tactics, how war and military actions work together by producing a change of will in the enemy, and how policy aims should be matched meticulously to military capability. But without a formal strategic education there are high risks in this self-educational process, and especially with the successive losses of experienced military and strategic leaders. Also, with highly ideological movements, as will be shown, it may be difficult at some point to differentiate what is ideological and what is "cold" strategic thinking.

Hamas was the least developed in theory. It was deprived of a formal theorizing and strategic educational process, and was a slow learner and lost many of its possible theorists or highly experienced leaders by the long-standing Israeli policy of decapitation (arrest or assassination of successive leaders). Also, there was a cultural element in that the Moslem Brotherhood model that Hamas drew upon highlighted the emotional and practical elements rather than theoretical and critical, in contrast to other, much richer, Sunni and Shiite trends.[65] Nevertheless, Hamas was quick to gain an understanding of tactical and technical methods after 2006.

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[63] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Arab Strategies and Israel's Response* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

[64] The author visited its Centre for Strategic Studies in the "Dhahia" (the southern suburbs of Beirut) and met its director. Basically, this centre had a library and a translating centre and none of its employees, including the director, had been taught strategic studies but some had political sciences degrees. The role of the Centre, according to the director, was to translate the latest Western and Israeli accounts on Hezbollah rather than formulate policy guidance.

Institutional

The PLO's institutional ability was problematic but had positive elements.At the formal level, the PLO maintained a sophisticated and highly democratic institutional setting -- The Palestinian National Council with its 300 members or more represented the legislative and higher authority for long-term policy, and the Executive Committee was the executive arm and oversaw all the organisational bodies, including military headquarters and the security apparatus. These bodies were essentially similar to those of a small modern state. However, two problems remained for the PLO's institutional capacity.

Firstly, there was massive diversity among its member movements on nearly everything: ideology, policy and long-term strategies. Also, most of these movements were to some extent, separated from Fatah, and many were affiliated to some regional actor. Even Fatah had to align itself at some point to one state or another. This caused internal rivalry which hindered the healthiness of policy and strategy making. This occurred especially at some critical junctures such as the strategic decision before 1970 regarding the main locus of effort, the position regarding Jordan and international terrorist groups, decisions after 1974 regarding the Lebanese Civil War and relations with Syria, and crucial changes in policy and diplomacy such as the 1974 Ten Point Plan and linked diplomatic initiatives.

The results were serious and irreparable. These strategic and political fallacies of the PLO can be seen as signs of weak conceptual or practical ability and were often acknowledged even by Fatah. Fatah's dilemma was that it was more concerned to establish a strategic formula than to look for a healthy institutional setting more suitable for strategy making.

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[65] Omar Ebid Hassana, *Revisions in the Thinking, Missionary (Da'wa) and Movement* (Kuala Lumpur: The International Islamic Centre for Islamic Thinking, 1998). (Arabic)

Another problem was the paternalistic way Arafat ran the PLO and Fatah, especially after 1982. He became more concerned with emphasising his personal authority by marginalizing strong platforms inside the PLO, or by dividing them with financial and promotional bribery rather than building professional and uncorrupted structures.[66] It was no surprise after the eviction from Beirut in 1982 that the PLO faced an extensive armed conflict with its offshoots in Lebanon and Syria, especially in response to Arafat's inclination in 1983 to a diplomatic pathway.[67]

After Oslo, as Fatah held power, the pool of recruits expanded in number and diversity as joining the movement become a way of social and career development. Corruption and rivalry between leaders coming back from abroad and the domestic leaders made centrality of command unachievable. But as Shapiro indicated, with the absence of security pressure on Fatah and minimal differences of opinion among its factions, this problem was only latent. It had to await the Second Intifada to explode.[68] The new military was explicitly obedient to Arafat and the PA leadership in de-escalating or avoiding indiscriminate suicide attacks.[69]

Hezbollah had the best institutional ability and was served by two exclusive conditions. The first was its indebtedness to *Welayat Faquih* ideology which emphasised religious obedience to the highest leadership, as represented by the Supreme Leader (Morshid) and the General Secretary, with the former being the arbiter in case of division (as when Khamenei salvaged the movement from splitting during the decision over whether to enter Lebanon's parliamentary elections in

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[66] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp.687-690.

[67] Anat Kurz, *Fatah and the Politics of Violence: The Institutionalization of Popular Struggle* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005) pp.105-109.

[68] Jacob Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organisations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) pp 209-224.

[69] Nigel Parsons, *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority: From Oslo to Al-Aqsa* (London: Routledge, 2012) p.296.

1992). Second, it was based in a very weak and decentralized state and within a safe socio-religious sanctuary in the Shiite community.

Although Hezbollah was not entirely free of Israeli security threats, even after 2000 as the assassination of its security chief in 2006 shows, nor was it completely free from military confrontations with Lebanese sections as the events of 1989 with Amal and 2008 with the Sunnis showed, these threats and confrontations were not constant as was the case for both the PLO and Hamas.

Hence, Hezbollah was able to preserve its strong centralization and clear authority in the hands of the General Secretary, who was charismatic, and the Magles Shura Al-Qarar, the highest communal authority, while permitting formal and informal debate strategic and operational decision making. Hezbollah's security and military apparatuses are under the control of the General Secretary[70], and all other structures such as the political bureau and central bureau were overseen by other members in Magles Shura. Generally, Hezbollah was open to internal criticism provided it was kept within the organisation, but this toleration of dissent is stronger in the higher echelons.[71] The security and military organisation and their cadres were secret even inside the organisation.[72]

Hamas presents a more mixed picture in terms of institutional capacity. It has a clear formal political authority represented in the hegemony of its legislative body, the Shura Council, and an executive arm, the Political Bureau, with responsibility over its security, military and civilian apparatuses. Both bodies contain elements from within the Occupied Territories and from outside. Also, the Shura contains non-Palestinian Moslem Brotherhood members.[73]

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[70] Although some reports claim that Nasrullah's authority was somewhat reduced by direct Iranian intervention.

[71] Interviews with the Political Bureau and Central Bureau heads by the reasearcher. (18-19 August 2008)

[72] Interviews with Abu Ahmed, a current operational commander (Beirut 2008) (19 August 2008)

[73] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas* pp.145-146.

However, as many researchers have indicated, there was a split in the command, with the exterior leadership more tied to and directed by the military. This led to more aggressive military course of action, especially in the scope and indiscriminate targeting of suicide attacks, as the exterior elements were less restrained in contrast to the internal commands in Gaza and West Bank.[74]The coup of 2007 and the subsequent escalations with Israel were attributed also to the external leadership because of its regional affiliation, not to the internal with its more modest policies since they are the ones who tend to face the consequences of escalation.[75]

The grading of institutional strategic ability, in spite of varied internal structures and functionality, has slightly different combined value among the three irregular movements. The PLO, with moderate information sharing, central decision making and operational/tactical flexibility but defective critical assessment and weak strategic intervention by political leadership would get a grade of lower medium.

Hezbollah has competent central decision making with decentralized operations and tactics, and sound strategic intervention by the political leadership, but moderate information sharing and critical assessment. This would give a grade of upper Medium.

Hamas has moderate information sharing, critical assessment and strategic intervention, but a competent decentralized operations, and this would secure lower medium grade.

The Practical Tier

The **PLO,** as has been described, suffered significant strategic discrepancies between its radical aims and inadequate means, and flawed strategic choices only aggravated the mismatch and increased its losses.

The PLO's theory of winning the conflict acknowledged the necessity for social, political and strategic transformation for both Palestinians and Arabs if its radical aims were to be attained, but it did not describe how these transformations would be achieved and how the inevitable contradictions between them would be addressed in a coherent strategy.

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[74] Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma,* pp.147-148.
[75] Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma,* pp.147-148.

As Sayigh suggested, options for armed struggle were not carefully studied and the necessary conditions were not met or created, whether for a short-lived insurgency inside the Occupied Territories, or a border guerrilla war, or formation of a semi-state through participation in a civil war and a regular military ability or achieving a balance of terror. Rather, as Sayigh indicated, these methods were used for other objectives: emphasising identity, which was seen as an end in itself, establishing the legitimacy and capability of an externally located semi-state in Lebanon, and as weapons in inter-movements rivalry.[76]

This led the PLO to adopt a series of strategies, often with an unclear or undefined terminology, which tended to create more trouble than solutions for its imminent objectives. Interestingly, some genuine and critical ideas were accepted by the Fatah leadership but institutional deficiency and cultural and personal aberrations hindered their implementation.

An insurgency (people's war) strategy should have acknowledged the Occupied Territories and its population as the main strategic and operational effort. The huge mismatch with Israel, both militarily and demographically, should have led to cooperation with Jordan as a back door for human and other resources if not a sanctuary to act from: as with Laos if not Hanoi.[77] Arab military and political weakness should have led to a milder political agenda from the beginning until the required transformation could occur.

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[76] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp. 687-690.

[77] Another sign of simplistic trial to imitate the Vietnamese insurgency was the famous call among PLO groups to transform Amman into "Hanoi" as the political and military base for the revolution. If Amman was not going to be "Hanoi", then it should then become "Lagos" to provide logistic support for the insurgency inside the Occupied Territories.

Even in terms of short-term thinking and military build-up, after 1974 the PLO formally abandoned the principle of a popular liberation war, leaving it isolated in Lebanon and increasingly drawn into the civil war. The sanctuary offered by Lebanon could have provided some strategic gain, as it did in 1981 and to a lesser extent in 1978, but this would have needed a different strategic orientation and build up, including positive relations with the Lebanese population through social and political work , smoothing the rifts with Syria, creating a guerrilla army or even a regular army which had a high affinity to irregular transformation with all the required flexibility of command and redundancy in logistical and communication systems, and entrenching a rocket arsenal at the expense of heavy artillery and armour.

Although **Hezbollah**'s long-term policy and strategy were heavily skewed to an overarching Shiite eschatology -- that the role of Hezbollah and other Shiite regional powers was to ignite regional conflict by engaging Israel, the imperial powers and the Arab regimes until the Mahdi returned and led it to total victory – its short-term strategy was remarkably effective. Nasrullah adopted in the late 1990s the theory of the "spider web" (a reference to a Qur'anic parable) referring to the internal weakness of Israel in societal and political terms (as a spider web), in which Israel's internal destruction only requires the resistance discourse to be catalysed.

However, as time passed with no sign of such a collapse within Israel, Hezbollah returned to the classic Imami theory and refocused itself to strategic defence and the possibility of engaging in a regional war if Israel attacked Iran or Syria for example.

From 1982, Hezbollah launched a gradualist guerrilla war while extending its socio-political base among the Shiite community. It succeeded in undermining Israeli efforts to transform the Security Zone into a buffer-zone. It combined all media, social welfare, political, security and military elements to bleed Israel and her Lebanese ally the SLAwhile amplifying its own military achievements, with disproportional psychological effect on the Lebanese, Shiites, Arabs, Israelis and the local population in the security zone. Hezbollah was the first movement in the region which both organised suicide attacks and recorded its operations for future broadcasting purposes.

In 1993, and again in 1996, it easily recognised the lesson missed by the PLO in its own experience, the potential for a balance of terror by using rockets to attack Israel's "soft belly" and built its doctrine, force structure, command system and technology in accordance. The operational methods that had originally been merely for protection against Israeli retaliations on guerrilla fighters in the 1990s became the main effort in 2006 to reach Hezbollah's desired strategic effect.

However, what was really fascinating about the Hezbollah strategy in 2006 was its adoption of regular operational and tactical methods added to its traditional irregularity in order to enhance the strategic effect of irregular war. In 2006 it still maintained an irregular strategy of bleeding the enemy and psychological shock, not a war of position or a new type of hybrid war as claimed by Hoffman from the strategic point of view[78], and Hezbollah used regular military methods only to increase the effect of its irregular strategy.

Hezbollah explicitly aimed to generate mistrust among the Israeli population for its political and military leadership, mistrust for the army among the political leadership, a loss of belief in the possibility of victory among all of them, and a sense of victory among the Arabs and Lebanese. Defeating elite forces over territory, demolishing dozens of tanks and partially demolishing a missile ship did not count for much tactically, or operationally, but had great psychological impact. This does not mean Hezbollah was simply manipulating the narrative on the basis of non-existent or small achievements, but represented tactical and operational achievements which could then be broadcast and amplified.

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[78] Being puzzled by Hezbollah's mixed and competent ways of fighting, some analysts considered the 2006 war as a new type of war (hybrid) and the term was used from then to describe the new era of wars elsewhere. As Murray proved, mixed ways of fighting, regular and irregular, or combining political, military, economic and ideational struggles, were common in history. More than that, Hezbollah chose mixed (hybrid) ways of fighting at *tactical and operational* levels purposefully in order to enhance its yet *irregular strategy*. Fank Hoffman, "Lessons from Lebanon: Hezbollah and Hybrid Wars", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, August 2006; Russell Glenn, "Thoughts on Hybrid Conflict", *The Small Wars Journal*, February 2009; Williamson Murray and Mansoor, *The Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2012).

Hezbollah moulded all its operational capability for this mission; a huge arsenal of short and medium-range missiles, tunnel and bunker networks, separate operational lines for guerrilla and rocket systems, a decentralized command which could be connected at some points by wired network, and individual training.

On the other hand a "victory syndrome" affected Hezbollah after 2006. No further direct confrontation with Israel had so far taken place to prove or disprove it, but its grandiose propaganda[79] is more than simply psychological warfare, as it was in the first intifada[80], especially when considered along with Hezbollah's ongoing regional ideological adventurism.

Hamas was again in between. In a way similar to Hezbollah, it did not set out to resolve how its long-term policy would be achieved, apart from waiting for an eventual socio-political transformation on an Islamic basis. This was identical to the perception of Fatah in the 1960s that the armed struggle would galvanize Arab unity and transformation, in contrast to Arab nationalists or leftists who required transformation first.

Its short-term strategy had much stronger elements than the PLO, but less strong than Hezbollah, and it also had weak points.

The Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine had always recognized the Occupied Territories as the strategic focus and operational centre of gravity because of its population. It abstained from military struggle until it had built dense social and organisational networks. It also benefited from both the positive effects of the PLO's negotiations and achievements, the partial sanctuary offered by the Palestinian Authority, and the general patriotic feelings in and around the first intifada. And the MB also benefitted from the PLO's mistakes – its loss of the Gulf resources after picking the wrong side in 1991, and the decline of Fatah's authority in the late 1990s with the failure of the Oslo Process and the corruption of the PA which began to undermine Fatah's legitimacy.

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[79] This argument was built through personal discussions with Hezbollah's leadership, especially about the possibility of "entering Jerusalem" in the next war! Nasrullah himself had publically announced in 2010 that Hezbollah was able to defeat 7 Israeli divisions in Lebanon!

[80] Ron Schleifer, *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2006).

In contrast to the PIJ which focused only on military activities, Hamas's extensive social network was the source of much wider recruitment and support. Hamas also followed the path of Hezbollah in both grand and military strategy, albeit in a fitful way given its shorter experience and the more hostile environment it faced.

Hamas used the operational path of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians during the 1990s and thereafter, but the combined effects of Israeli counter-measures and its own realization of the negative messages conveyed by such attacks forced it to adopt other methods. From the late 1990s, Hamas gradually moved towards using rockets to achieve a balance of terror. In addition to the external sources obtained through the tunnels to Egypt, it began early to build its basic armaments industry.

Hamas managed to run the Al-Aqsa intifada in a competent way, combining guerrilla, rockets and suicide attacks[81], fostering operational unity with other movements, especially Fatah's military wings, and using the media to turn regional and international opinion against Israel.

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[81] Hamas and Hezbollah claim to be in accordance with Islamic teachings on the ethical way of conducting war, (*jus in bello)*. However, Islamic law obligates the avoidance of non-combatants, women, children and worshippers of other religions during fighting and this was a point of agreement among the formal teachings of all jurisprudence schools, but they can still find a **way around** for their followers to break this law as the practice of suicidal attacks and rocket firing for both Hezbollah and Hamas shows. (Hamas considered all Israelis as occupiers and combatants. Hezbollah employs the famous justification of technical insufficiency that infected Europe before WWII, and a response to Israel's attacks on civilians. See: Wahba Al-Zuhaily, *The War Laws in Islam* (Beirut, Resalah Publishing, Arabic, 2000); Alia Brahimi, *Jihad and Just War in the War on Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). For basic Islamic laws of war, and for Hamas' justification see Nawwaf Takrory, *Martyrdom Operations: A Jurisprudent Perspective* (Beirut: Dar al Fikr, 2003 - Arabic). For Hezbollah see "Civilians Under Assault: Hezbollah's Rocket Attacks on Israel in 2006 War", *Human Rights Watch*, 28 August 2007.

However, its real problems started with its decision to run in the general election of 2006. In addition to the basic contradiction this offered to its policy of not recognizing the Oslo Accords, put Hamas in a direct unresolvable confrontation with Fatah, which ended with another faulty decision, the launching of its coup.

The strategic logic of insurgency is to retain free strategic initiative and elusiveness to bleed the enemy rather be intimidated by him. Hamas controlled Gaza. As it did not recognize the basic conditions of international politics it was open to a wide confrontation with Israel, a direct confrontation which it was impossible to win. By besieging Gaza, Israel could bring Hamas to its knees at the peak of any escalatory process. However, the rocket balance of terror is sufficient to maintain the status quo, especially given Israel's failure to develop an effective strategic and operational response.

Only in 2009, when Israel launched a military campaign with an unrealistic aim, could Hamas to some extent genuinely claim a degree of victory, at least in the sense of denying its opponent victory. However, in 2012 and 2014, no matter what the boldness and sacrifice of Hamas and Gaza inhabitants achieved, it had to come to an end in order to feed the two million inhabitants and preserve its authority.

The operational dilemma for Hamas after 2006 in both enhancing operational capability and shaping operational art was secondary to its defective strategic choice. Hamas had to invest in rockets as the main arm in the cyclic deterrent campaigns, but being involved strategically in *regular* defence it had no room to exploit the strategic leverage of irregular operational art and means, and had to invest hugely in regular formations to maintain domestic control.

To sum up, Hezbollah's strategic practical ability could be ranked as high as having moderate clear policy and grand strategy, and competent military strategy and guiding operational domains. Hamas is to be set at a higher medium level before 2006 and low after 2006 with its unclear policy aims, defective strategy and moderate guidance of operations. The PLO is in the lower rank as it had moderate clear policy and enhancing operational capability, but failed grand and military strategies, and shaping operational art.

This to a large extent **reflects** the combined assessment of conceptual and institutional tiers. Only in the case of Hamas after 2006, when it lost some visionary leaders and was lured by the game of domestic power to rule Gaza, did the new strategic context prove very obstructive for sound strategy making.

Remarks on Israel's Strategic Ability

Two points run through all layers of Israeli strategic ability in irregular wars. Firstly, there is continuity with most of the regular strategic elements that we described in the previous chapters, which is to be expected as these characteristics originated from common conditioning strategic dimensions.

Secondly, the negative effects of these characteristics are doubled in the case of irregular war. All states and their regular armies have an inherent difficulty in countering insurgencies, which is known as trying to eat soup with a knife, but the IDF had twofold difficulties.

The Conceptual

Conceiving strategic theory and its contextualization is difficult, as has been shown. But if Israel had a normally weak conceptual strategic ability, the lack of clarity is aggravated in the case of irregular wars.

Israeli theorists, at least in retrospect, have aimed to rationalize border retaliations as part of conventional deterrence.[82] As Shimshoni said:

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[82] See Jonathan Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence: Border Warfare from 1953 to 1970* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); Ze'ev Drory, *Israel's Reprisal Policy 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliation* (London: Frank Cass,2005); Eli Liberman, *Reconceptualising Deterrence: Nudging towards Rationality in Middle Eastern Rivalries* (London: Routledge, 2013).

> [A] Decision maker who would pursue deterrence may face a rather uncomfortable set of choices, not between war and peace, but rather, between a small war now and a larger one later, or vice versa. The latter kind of choice is precisely the idea of reputation, which requires violence *now* to prevent greater violence *later*. [83]

However, given that these retaliations were a major part of major or protracted wars, those of 1956 and 1967 which led to the War of Attrition, and the 1973, 1978 and 1982 wars and the protracted war that followed, border retaliation may be seen as a strategy for exacerbation rather than deterrence.

There was no place in Israeli strategic literature, which was limited anyway up to the 1980s, for counter-insurgency. Even with the theoretical development after the difficulties faced in 1973, the reopening of the National Defence College in 1977, and the emergence of a military theorist group pioneered by Wallach, Israeli military literature still failed to formulate counter-insurgency theories. Even Martin Van Creveld in the 1990s was only able to criticize when he explored the inability of the IDF to use its traditional operational art for such missions, but he did not provide any theoretical alternative.[84]

With the new century, the field of strategic studies was expanded inside Israel, as was obvious in the multiplicity of strategic think tanks[85], the flood of good quality strategic and military sociological studies, and the trend inside the army for being "smart". However, most of these treatises were either *regularizing* the irregular war by focusing on military decisions, *tacticizing* it by focusing on military and security countermeasures, considering it a new type of war, or being critical from political or social viewpoints.

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[83] Shimshoni, *Conventional Deterrence*, p.236.

[84] Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive,* pp.350-352.

[85] For example the Institute for Policy and Strategy (Herzliya Conference); the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies (BESA) and the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University.

The “smart” army project did not provide the expected benefits. Higher operational courses focused on managerial and information improvements rather than enhancing the strategic or even the operational art. The attempt by Shimon Naveh to establish an “operational thinking institute” inside the IDF, and the operational doctrine it produced were heavily criticised and even accused of liquidating the Israeli operational art through its post-modern language and flawed structures.[86] Given the catalogue of IDF mistakes in 2006, it is hard to believe that it was the responsibility of any specific doctrine, especially considering the anti-theory trend of the IDF. However, Naveh can be blamed for his fuzzy and imprecise language and for not providing any clear answer, but not for providing the wrong answer.

Why does this hostility to theory still plague Israeli irregular strategic thinking in spite of the general improvement in the fields of regular strategy and operational art?

I suggest the answer is threefold. Irregular war, as indicated, is not war with a different nature, but its character is heavily politicised and the civilian population is the centre of gravity. Hence, a lesser degree of tacticization and militarization of strategy could still limit the ability to think and perform strategically.

Secondly, any counterinsurgency strategy needs a form of political accommodation, whether through a degree of political compromise to address the insurgency cause or to apply restraint on the use of force so as not to increase collateral damage. Israel, especially its strategic community, has not shown itself ready for such a compromise. Thirdly, it was maintained instead that “softening” military conduct would merely increase the human risk for the fighter, a fate that was explicitly warned of by some Israeli strategists.

Hence, the eyes of Israeli strategists were not blind to counterinsurgency strategy but they **have chosen to ignore it**. For example, according to former Israeli Defence

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[86] Stuart Cohen, *Israel and its Army: From Cohesion to Confusion* (London: Routledge, 2009) pp.81-83.

Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, from his very first day in office, in mid-1996, he was told that "terrorism and guerrilla actions couldn't be defeated militarily."[87]

The Institutional

Institutional parameters were improved after 1973, as the Basic Laws of 1976 established political authority over the military. The Knesset's role was to increase in the following years in overseeing the military budget, and even in doctrine. From the 1990s onwards, there was a permanent Ministerial Defence Committee to manage defence matters. After 2006, and with the advice of the Winograd Commission, the National Security Council was established for better handling and orchestration of strategy.

However, as Peri indicated, the military ability to occupy the strategic vacuum left by the politicians was very apparent in these new conflicts, especially the aggressive handling of the Protective Wall campaign in 2002.[88]

On the other hand, as indicated earlier, the politicians' over-involvement was not new. For example, Barak ordered a swift withdrawal from Lebanon in 2002 without addressing the request of his military, which was later proved to be right, to wait until a peace agreement was reached with Syria and then to encircle Hezbollah or at least to phase the withdrawal over stages to make it not look like a defeat. This image of defeat would, it was feared, encourage an uprising in the Territories.

Although the institutional parameters should not be considered the same over a large time frame 1965-2014 and in all the three wars combined, there is a general improvement that cannot be mistaken, especially in the critical assessment. However, some drop may happen temporarily as was the case in 2006 War or 2009-

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[87] Avi Kober, *"Israeli War Objectives into an Era of Negativism"*, in Uri Bar-Joseph, *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century* (London: Frank Cass Publications, 2001) p. 149.

[88] Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Israeli Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006).

10 Gaza campaign due to chaos in domestic politics. Generally, this institutional ability falls in the upper medium grade.

The Practical

The IDF's basic counterinsurgency strategy has been, since the early 1950s, based on two elements: defensive measures and punitive deterrence.

However, some elements of pacification and winning hearts and minds were occasionally used as during the successful counterinsurgency plan of 1967-68 in the West Bank. The IDF mixed intimidation of the population with economic advancement and facilitated the emergence of a new domestic leadership. However, when these attempts were tried later they failed due to the rising strength of nationalism among the Palestinians. When used in Lebanon, it succeeded obviously among the Maronites in Security Zone and some Shiites, but Hezbollah propaganda mixed with intimidation proved more effective.

The real problem of containing such nationalist-based insurgency is the centrality of political compromise which Israel was not happy to offer genuinely. The hardest time for Hamas and the PIJ was the period after 1994, when the PLO's "getting on the train" strategy was very effective in distancing the major part of the population from the insurgents, and even gave the PA legitimacy to repress them. However, the insurgents gained support after the Oslo Process stalled, and they began to flourish after their successful initiatives during the Al-Aqsa intifada. Before 2007, Palestinian resistance could easily utilize the Israeli incursion to enrich its recruitment and social base.

Only after 2007, when Hamas was trapped in Gaza, did the situation become better for Israel,[89] but its periodic incursions led to massive international condemnation and regional unrest.

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[89] Gleis and Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas,* p.182.

The centre of gravity in the Israeli strategic effort was the level of security. Its concern could be reduced temporarily by tactical countermeasures, (of which Israel became a major technology provider internationally), and the threat of punitive retaliation. But without a wider approach looking for means of depriving the insurgents of their cause, isolating them from the population, advancing moderate elements within the target community, and separating the insurgents from their regional patronage networks, a military victory and/or a retaliatory effect would only be short-lived, even if it could be achieved given the balance of terror.

Shmuel Bar concluded that if there was any success to be gained by using the deterrence strategy it would be at the tactical level and temporary. He mentioned that, "Hezbollah have benefited from what is called in Israeli deterrence parlance, "the power of the weak". This is the relative power that the weaker side maintains vis-à-vis the stronger party. It can be based on one or a combination of three strategies:

1. Neutralizing key components of its opponent's advantage. This is done:

a. By finding a defence against the tactics that are central to that advantage, or

b. By creating circumstances that prevent the enemy from using those capabilities that give it the advantage

2. Creating an internal situation in the target society that renders acquiescence to pressure or to deterrent threats virtually impossible.

3. Posing counter-threats that occupy the superior power and narrow its room for manoeuvre"[90]

The worst record in Israeli strategy-making was in the 2006 Lebanon war. Israel broadcast unrealistic political aims: neutralising the military capability of

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[90] Shmuel Bar, "Israeli Experience in Deterring Terrorist Organizations", Herzelia Conference 2007.

Hezbollah,[91] which could not be achieved against an irregular movement by a short military campaign -- especially since the Israeli military strategy was preoccupied by the ideas of Dan Haluts (the Chief of Staff and former Air Chief) on the decisiveness of air power (strategically) -- either by decapitation or strategic bombing to coerce the population or through attacking the C3 and logistical systems. Deferring the ground operation was a problem, but even when it was brought forward, the operational art and force structure were defective.

The dilemma of Israeli military strategy was exacerbated by facing an opponent who applied both regular and irregular operational and tactical methods competently[92], while the Israeli operational art and force structure proved weak for both missions. As Naveh indicated, the longstanding urban fighting and fighting much weaker irregular opponents in the Al-Aqsa intifada "spoilt" Israel's (traditionally superb) regular warfare capability. For example, IDF training in the preceding years did not go beyond brigade level, while in 2006 it had to operate at the divisional level. Hence chaos predominated in the operational command and control system.[93]

The counter-irregular capability at the tactical and operational levels was even more problematic. Naveh, whose doctrine was blamed for much of the poor war-fighting methods in 2006, claimed that the actual doctrine, which was never widely read, advocated light infantry and commando operations with close air-support and heavy intelligence networking to deal with an irregular enemy.[94] The classic Israeli method of armoured thrust, when armoured columns devoid of combined mechanized infantry break through the front and demolish its coherence, was not suitable in the topography of South Lebanon, facing small irregular but well trained formations equipped with state-of-the-art anti-tank guided missiles (Cornets).[95]

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[91] This was the formal political aim. Cordesman in *Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War,* explained that it was needed as well for counter-Iranian strategy, and he added another aim: restoring the deterrent capability after the unilateral withdrawals from Gaza and Lebanon.

[92] Shimon Naveh's interview (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2007)

[93] Shimon Naveh's interview (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2007)

[94] Shimon Naveh's interview (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2007)

The complexity of Hezbollah in 2006; the fact that it could employ mixed operational and tactical activities while still having the same irregular strategy also worked against Israel. Hezbollah's fighting capability can be confronted by military methods and structure that have the flexibility to shift between two patterns or can combine them in the same campaign. But this military counter-operation and counter-tactics is not sufficient to counter its *strategy*.

It is questionable whether Israeli strategists bothered to formulate a comprehensive strategy, by defining clear and reasonable political aims, aiming not to alienate the Lebanese population but rather to isolate Hezbollah further, and to cut its external support by diplomatic means or by softening its own conflict with Iran in addition to developing a better operational art and force structure.

Ironically, the previous mistakes were mostly repeated in Gaza in 2008-9 where unrealistic political aims, tactically occupied strategy, and unrestrained use of force were once again strongly in evidence. Had Hamas been stronger operationally, as in 2014, for example, even with the costs it had incurred in ruling Gaza, Israel would have suffered the same losses as 2006.

To sum up, Israeli practical strategy making would secure a low rank with moderate grand strategy, good enhancement of operational capability but defective clarity of policy aims, military strategy and in guiding the operational art. This does not reflect the combined rank of conceptual and institutional parameters as will be discussed in the conclusion.

The Outcomes

As an irregular war is usually protracted with different phases and long duration, is it conceivable to comment on the outcome of an ongoing conflict?

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[95] Porter, *Military Orientalism*, pp.180-182.

It may be easier in the case of the PLO, as it has been claimed by its current leader frequently since his presidential campaign of 2005 that he now only believes in the possibility of a civilian political solution, and not armed struggle, to achieve the rights of the Palestinian people. However, what about Hezbollah and Hamas? What even about Fatah, some elements of which participated in the last Gaza campaign in 2014? What will the position of Abu Mazen's successors be? It is hard to reach an analytical conclusion before the political conclusion.

Nevertheless, the wars have been protracted and provided enough solid results to draw a general picture of what was achieved for all sides.

Clearly the greatest loser was the PLO. Its aspirations have progressively descended from replacing Israel with a bi-national state to the acceptance of a limited territory with limited authority (something it had refused in 1978) to the current hopeless deadlock.

On the other side, the PLO succeeded in fostering and establishing a genuine Palestinian identity in the face of all odds: Arab governments that distanced themselves from the cause or utilized it for their own purposes,[96] and Israelis, whose Prime Minister stated in 1969 that the Palestinian people simply did not exist.[97] The PLO's struggle also spread the national feeling that inspired the first civilian intifada which, among other things, led to the Oslo Accords.

Even had the PLO accepted the Camp David Agreements in 1978, there was no guarantee that Israel would have accepted given the very weak Arab position and Begin's stated desire (along with many Revisionists) to annex the West Bank just as Israel had annexed the Golan. During the heroic era of the PLO in the late 1960s, Israel did not envision any solution along the lines of the Oslo Accords, but saw the future in terms of the absolute subjugation of the inhabitants of the territories.

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[96] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State,* pp.684-685.

[97] The famous quote in the Sunday Times on 15th June 1969.

Hezbollah was highly successful in achieving its short-term aims. It forced Israel to withdraw from Lebanon, apart from the Shebaa farms (which were really only ever an alibi for what was in fact a forced departure[98]) and to return its prisoners of war. It enhanced its monopoly over the Shiite community, became a central arbiter in Lebanese politics, and preserved its military machinery. Since the success of 2006, Hezbollah has massive Arab popular support, even among Sunnis. The current setback to its regional legitimacy is not related to the conflict with Israel. Israel on the other hand has managed to reach a balance of terror with Hezbollah, albeit temporarily. But Hezbollah needs to decide how to move forward to the next phase of the conflict and whether to adopt an offensive strategy to find a benefit in breaking this balance.

Hamas, with the PIJ, won a partial sanctuary in Gaza by forcing Sharon to adopt the disengagement plan and remove Israeli settlements from the area, the second set of settlements to be dismantled after Sinai. However, it had to sacrifice its role in the West Bank, a more strategic and spiritually important area for the Palestinians, and by being tied by its role as ruler of Gaza it was not free to escalate the conflict for fear of being held responsible for the ensuing retaliation.

The causal links in these wars generally followed the presumed theory.

Low Israeli practical ability versus high ability of Hezbollah led to the strategic success of the latter. However, it led to relative superiority of Israel when faced with the even lower PLO ability. With Hamas it was mixed: there was a relative superiority of Hamas before 2006 according to its moderate ability but when its ability dropped after 2006, Israel was relatively superior.

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[98] In the author's interview on 18 August 2008 with Dr Amin Hatit, former chief of the Lebanese Staff College who was close to Hezbollah, he confirmed what was broadcasted by Israel, that Hezbollah was using the issue of the Shebaa farms, previously Syrian, as an excuse to legitimize its militarization inside Lebanon.

CONCLUSION

This study explores how strategy links military operations, operational art and objectives to the political aims pursued in war. It uses the concept of “strategic ability”, developed as an analytical framework, to assess the ability of states and non-state actors to perceive, institutionalize and practice strategy.

Knowledge of how strategy works or should work in theory (strategic logic) and practice (ability) is fundamental to answering the question of how the political goals of war can be achieved. Political winning in *the immediate aftermath of war* can be best explained by having advantageous strategic ability in the practical sphere; generating sound grand and military strategies, and guiding the operational capabilities and art to fulfil strategic requirements.

The fundamental issue is that defective strategic performance is the primary cause of the failure of states with military prowess to use their military power wisely in war, whether or not they achieve military victory. Military victory, an operational and tactical concept, lends itself to strategic appreciation which decides on its nature, scale, restrictions and whether it is even an essential requirement for political success. Moreover, strategy should shape the operational conduct and objectives meticulously and closely, and in harmony with non-military means, for its requirements.

Other variables also affect the political outcome of war, such as poor diplomacy in containing the opponent or seeking stable alliances and regional order, and defective war termination process to shape the post-war political, social and geostrategic environment to achieve a satisfactory long-term outcome. There is also the difficulty of winning asymmetric wars, and the question of the leverage military victory has by itself on the political ends, or the assumed qualitative and quantitative means of power. However, these variables are of less significance than strategic effectiveness.

The political outcome in the immediate aftermath of war is directly connected to strategic performance, primarily military, during the war. Beyond that, however, different methods and variables come into play and the peace process and restoration or maintenance of order become more complex.

The grand strategy concept in its long-term sense, which is not the primary focus of this research, was only considered when the requirements of the long-term achievement of political aims are clearly defined by the policy before or during the war.

Winning the war can be measured over three grades. **"Strategic success"** is the achievement of the political aims of the war, and the requirements of long-term policy if these are clearly delineated. "**Strategic advantage"** is when one actor does not achieve its full list of political aims but its political achievement is proportionally higher than the opponent's. **"Relative superiority"** occurs if neither side achieves its political aims or both achieve them in a stalemate, in which case other factors become significant in recognising the winning status, mainly the costs of war, the advantageous status of post-war arrangements for either party, and long-term political/grand strategic superiority even if not clearly aimed for within the war time scale.

Strategic ability is the ability to perceive the logic of strategy conceptually through strategists with sound strategic logic, to fulfil its requirements institutionally, and apply it to guide the fighting power.

Strategic logic is how strategy works in theory and links policy to operations (see table 1). The crux of this logic is the use of military and non-military means to affect the political will of the enemy while keeping the means-ways-ends calculus right. Policy has to pass the achievability test and operational art and performance should reflect the strategic requirements.

Institutional strategic ability is measured by five criteria: information sharing, critical and comprehensive assessments, clear political authorization, strategy-sensitive political intervention and the formidable position of the military. In the case of non-state actors, where unification of the political and military commands exists, balanced strategic centralization and operational/tactical decentralization replace the formidable position of the military.

Practical strategic ability involves generating sound strategies (clear policy, competent grand strategy and military strategy) and guiding the fighting ability (enhancing counter-operational capability and shaping the operational art and structure to meet strategic requirements).

The strategic ability of each side is assessed in each layer and graded high, medium or low. Advantageous *practical* strategic ability was graded high, medium or low.

This study also explores how competent making of strategy (the practical tier) reflects the actor's grade in sound strategic logic and effective institutionalization of political-military relations. Generally, executing strategy reflects competence or weakness in the conceptual and institutional tiers, unless other variables interfere such as personal aberrations or being outmanoeuvred by the enemy's performance.

Elements of Strategic Logic

- War is a *duel* where military means are used for policy ends
- Strategy attempts to keep *means – ways – ends* in harmony
- Strategy works by affecting the *enemy will* to accept the required end state
- In *War with total aims:* the will of enemy is destroyed by attacking COG which is contextual
- In *War with limited aims:* the will is modified by affecting the enemy's calculation and security
- *Military objectives* are variable and decided by strategy in each war
- *Levels of war* are hierarchical but fusional
- *Operational level* of war is a modern age requirement
- *Operational art* is not a fixed formula but its contextual and should be strategy sensitive
- Strategic logic is *invariable* but its contextualization in age and specific case varies

Table 1

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Three other major themes researched in this thesis are connected to the primary theme of winning wars by better executed strategy.

The first is **continuity of strategic logic** in regular or irregular war, with variable contextualization according the type of war and specific cases.

The second is how political-military relations should be organized to permit the proper functioning of institutional strategic ability mentioned above. The study supports the idea that no ideal relational model or regime type (democratic vs. non-democratic) leads on its own to competent institutionalization of strategy. Rather, institutional competence may require shaping civil-military relations in ways that are sensitive to political structure and functionally driven.

The third theme illustrates how the **operational level** of war becomes a political, strategic and organizational necessity, and over-segmentation of the levels of war jeopardizes strategic logic and practice. Linked to that, **operational art and capabilities,** not conduct alone, should reflect strategic requirements in each war. All components of the "fighting power" as laid down in Western doctrines should meticulously reflect the strategic insight. Operational art, considering all the debates on its historical evolution and practical complexities, is not a fixed or one-arm formula. In addition to reflecting the strategic requirements, it should be very sensitive to the opponent's operational art and capability, cultural variations and other factors such as learning operational lessons, and socio-technological and institutional derivatives.

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On the practical side, the Arab-Israeli wars, this study attempts to offer an objective and balanced account of this sensitive conflict whereas most studies with very few exceptions are either strongly partisan in content and conclusion or deal exclusively with the political or military spheres, with little attempt to link the two from the strategic perspective. Nevertheless, the main motive for choosing the Arab-Israeli wars as the subject for analysis was the richness they offer for testing and developing theory.

By using the proposed theory that advantageous strategic ability (in the practical tier) should lead to advantageous war outcome, this thesis examines the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1948, 1967, Attrition, 1973 and the wars with irregulars (the PLO, Hezbollah and Hamas).

This causal link proposition will now be traced in these wars and compared with competing explanations. The primary proposition about losing or winning wars is best examined by causal link tracing and cross comparisons. Final remarks and summation about the other study themes will follow.

The 1948 War

This had the most successful outcome in Israel's strategic history; hence it provides a valuable methodological opportunity for exploration of a variation in dependent variable that is the opposite of the main study question: failure to achieve political war aims in spite of military prowess. Israel achieved strategic success in the war but it was restricted for understandable cultural and ideological reasons.

Israel's success can only be interpreted by looking at her strong strategic ability vis-à-vis Arabs. The **pure military** school of explanation may propose a link between the war outcome and the battlefield decisions of the Danny, Yoav and Horev operations. However, this only touches a part of the reality as it does not highlight the role of strategic guidance on the operational side of war. It ignores the role of the strategic leadership in keeping other fronts quiet which kept Jordanian and Iraqi forces temporarily out of the military equation and made it possible to achieve the outcomes of Yoav and Horev. It also fails to consider that these battlefield decisions were reached after a lengthy period of military incompetence, even on the southern front, and omits the fact that operational success was a fruit of a huge military build-up which was the responsibility of the strategic leadership. This build up, while preserving the critical bases on the coastal strip, was also supported by the local defences of the peripheral settlements, a reliance that the IDF saw as contradicting the principle of concentration of forces.

Comparison of the **state power means, especially quantitative, and the fighting ability** that Israel and the Arabs started the war with, shows that the outcome was totally incongruent as Israel was in a very disadvantageous position. Israel did have the advantage in **qualitative** means of state power (better social-technological criteria, resolve, and governance) but can this be effective without a sophisticated strategy?

The Asymmetric theory attributing political success to the war being irregular was not applicable in this case since the Arab irregular warfare was defeated before May 1948 when the regular phase of the war began.

Israeli diplomacy certainly had a positive impact on the outcome, especially by rallying international support from the US and USSR, and by luring Transjordan to defect from the Arab coalition, but it also had very awkward elements such as its blindness to the possibility of a political resolution. Beginning with Ben-Gurion, Israel considered diplomacy an operational auxiliary arm rather than a grand strategic means on its own merits. This consideration also applies to Israel's **war termination** ability, which was far from ideal.

The 1967 War

Like many other wars, the 1967 war is very complex to analyse. There are difficulties involved in outlining the political aims of both sides and judging strategies and obscure policies. The frictions of personal and domestic politics and contested agendas, and the intervention of international and regional players are all sources of difficulty. Nevertheless, the war serves as a clear example that even a unique and decisive military victory does not suffice to attain political war aims; neither those capable of political resolution nor the direct aims (restoring deterrence and avoiding further wars), even if they are modest and short-term. Israel only succeeded to relieve what was infused in propaganda, in contrast to reality, as existential threat, and to open Tiran Strait which was a low-profile political aim (**strategic advantage**), but by launching this high scale war with all subsequent grave strategic, political and social sequences regionally and even internationally.

The Egyptian strategic ability was totally bankrupt in institutional and practical components. In Israel however, the practical strategy was strong in enhancing operational counter-capabilities and mobilizing the state means of power for war, with poor performance in formulating grand and military strategies, and shaping the operational art strategically.

The causal link tracing in this war was slightly incongruent with the presumed theory. Israel's low advantageous ability should give her a relative superiority, but she had strategic advantage.

In other words, the outcome for Israel was better, even slightly, than her practical strategic ability suggested even when compared with the Egyptian. The reason for this is possibly related to the dynamic and reactive nature of war. Outstanding operational decisiveness severely affected Egypt's strategic choices and ability further, especially given her institutional chaos at the time illustrated by the sudden order to retreat issued by the psychologically unstable Amer, which caused the rout of the army and difficulties in quickly re-forming it. This essentially masked the false assumptions governing the Israeli operational art, which needed two further wars to uncover.

Indeed, Egypt's weak institutional ability totally undermined its entire strategic performance in the war even though this was of medium conceptual ability.

If strategic ability is evaluated in an algebraic way -- by considering that all layers or variables have the same power to produce an effect -- the **proportional importance** of strong or weak points may be missed, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the context. Some elements of strategic ability, say tacticization and militarization of Israeli strategy and an obsession with security, or defective civil-military relations on the Egyptian side may affect the outcome in different ways.

The cascade of events during any war creates sensitive points at which good or bad ability may have a greater effect on the outcome. For instance, the two examples mentioned above were far more decisive than the other elements in shaping this war. This phenomenon may be called "variable expression".[1] Hence, medium ability in a specific layer, say institutional or conceptual, may lead to a worse outcome than expected if a problematic element was critical in determining the outcome of war in a specific context, in addition to the cross reaction and compensation among the elements of strategic dimensions.

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[1] I borrowed this term from the field of genetics where an abnormal gene responsible for a specific condition may manifest differently depending on known or unknown, and intrinsic or environmental factors.

The actual problem for both Egypt and Israel was strategic ability, although there was a slight Israeli advantage, especially in guiding the fighting power. This paid off some strategic advantage resulting from a clear military victory over a weak enemy.

In this war, **all competing theories** for interpreting the weak link between Israel's military prowess, and political winning can be dismissed.

1- Quantitative superiority in numbers and resources did not help Egypt achieve its desired political or military outcomes, although it may have helped in the policy of resisting and restoring.

2- Israel's qualitative superiority in social, political and military terms was clearly manifested in its excellent mobilization and fighting ability but was not congruent with the outcome. This was not offset by quantitative inferiority, as the decisive military victory showed.

3- The Israel's end stage strategy and diplomatic methods were problematic, as has been shown, but the sources of these problems can be traced to its defective grand and military strategies from the pre-war period up to the later stage of the war.

The Attrition War

This rehearsal for the 1973 War proved critical in affecting the strategic perceptions and practice of the Israelis and Egyptians. Israel maintained the status quo at the end of this war without any diplomatic concessions but had to pay a high price in heavy human losses. For Egypt, the injured national and military spirit after the humiliating defeat of 1967 was to a large extent repaired. Egypt had also rebuilt her army, used the Rogers' initiative to move anti-air missiles to the front, and pushed the USSR to take a direct responsibility in her war effort.

The indirect effects of the war no doubt favoured the Egyptians in the long run as they matured different planning concepts and operational methods that proved vital for the next war. In Israel, however, the political and military leaderships misread the War of Attrition which led to a false "concept" that Egypt would be unable to resume fighting until there was a dramatic change in the military balance.

The 1973 War

Both sides had vague political aims before the war, but there were **strategic objectives,** clear on the Egyptian side and opaque on Israel's. The Egyptian Army was to smash Israel's "national security doctrine" and occupy and consolidate a strip of territory on the East Bank of the Suez Canal to strengthen the country's subsequent negotiating position. Israel's objective was an implicit formula requiring the IDF to defend occupied territory, keep its qualitative military edge and annihilate all advancing Arabs forces, with further occupation of territory in order to deter any subsequent attack and consolidate its successes.

The war outcome was **relative superiority for Egypt**: achieving a degree of the strategic effect aimed for which was undermining the Israeli security theory, better post-war territorial gains and post-disengagement military deployment, and restoring honour **versus** a more coercive leverage for Israel at the end of war, better long-term grand strategic outcome but was not planned for and was only feasible after long and complex diplomatic pathway, and less casualty.

Egypt had a **low advantageous practical ability** (medium ability versus lower Israeli ability). Despite her vague policy, assumptions of grand and military strategies were effective, especially for the first half of war. Her strength however was in enhancing the operational capability and shaping the operational art strategically. Israel had poor practical strategic ability, but improved the components of grand and military strategies, enhancing the operational capability, and adapting the operational art in the second half of war benefiting from the Egyptian grave strategic and operational faults, and the US air-lift.

The causal link of this war, hence, was almost congruent with the presumed theory.

Linking strategic practical abilities to both conceptual and institutional abilities was congruent with our hypothesis in the Egyptian case but deviated in Israel's case. Israel performed better in the practical sphere than her conceptual and institutional ability suggested. This can be seen as resulting from Egypt's military and strategic setback in the second half of the war which gave Israel more strategic leverage, and from the critical intervention of the United States to rein in the Israeli obsession with operational decisiveness.

The ultimate outcome of this war cannot be interpreted thoroughly and comprehensively by the competing theories:

- Egypt's high **quantitative** superiority in manpower was only reflected partially in the conflict due to its defective mobilization. Economic and **qualitative** social resources were in Israel's favour which offset its quantitative inferiority, but the margin was less than in 1967 due to Egyptian improvements. However, the complex and dynamic military and political outcomes do not fit with this simplistic equation.

- **Militarily**, the outcome was an operational advantage for Israel, but the strategic outcome was still different. Egyptian forces outnumbered the Israelis, but their formations were different: Israel had four enhanced armoured divisions against Egypt's five infantry divisions in static defences supported by two mechanised divisions, two armoured divisions, and various Sa'aqa battalions. The Air Forces and navies were comparable in size (although Israel had also to fight on another front), and the IAF status was operationally and technologically superior. Israel's general operational superiority, evidenced in its swift recovery from the initial shock, may at best explain the final operational outcome, but not the strategic or political outcomes.

The conversion of Israel's operational superiority into a strategic effect (coercive power) was limited by a number of factors: Cold War dynamics made both Superpowers keen on de-escalation; Israel's greater dependency on the United States due to its airlift program made it more susceptible to pressure; the operational risks and challenges Israeli divisions faced in maintaining and employing the counter-crossing; and of course Israel's security concept and psychology that were challenged deeply by the war.

- **Diplomatic factors** also had significant input, including poor Egyptian diplomacy and the US intervention to supply then restrain Israel. However, while diplomacy was considered here as a grand strategic means, military practice, if not the operational outcome, was more important in determining the political gains in the war.

- The war termination was no doubt critical, but the early strategic ordeal for Israel also made a strong impression on the outcome.

In the 1973 War, and the regular wars generally, it is important to indicate the effect the war duel had, to a large extent, **on the psychology, cognition and perception** of the enemy and the intervening regional and super powers, during the war or after it, in achieving the ***Clausewitzian strategic effect*** in limited wars of modifying the political will of the enemy.

The party which had the advantage, regardless of any solid formula of operational art or a military victory, was the one which was more able to perceive this logic and apply it in the very complex environment of strategic practice involving military operations, diplomacy, signalling Super Powers, and mobilizing its own resources in a way that recognized its own strengths and vulnerabilities and those of the enemy.

The Irregular Wars (PLO, Hezbollah and Hamas)

Although the irregular Arab-Israeli wars were unique from certain aspects -- severe historical enmity, the perception that the conflict was politically unsolvable, the total aims raised by the insurgents and the ongoing nature of the conflict-- some theoretical conclusion can still be reached.

Irregular wars do not have a different strategic logic from regular wars, since they use military force to achieve a strategic effect sufficient to modify the enemy's political will, but they take place in a very different context. As the irregulars are much weaker and do not have access to state resources, they have to draw a strategic pathway along which force is not only used to modify the enemy's will by bleeding it, but to build a cause, a legitimacy, and to gain access to resources. They accomplish this by affecting the perception and will of the population as well as the regional and international actors. These actors are the objects of strategy in regular wars too, but they are much more important in irregular wars.

As irregular wars need meticulous strategic handling of the utility of force, Israel's strategic weakness in this area was further strained and led to lesser outcomes than those it achieved in regular wars. Tacticization of strategy and obsession with operational decisiveness, which intensify the popular grievance and insurgents' legitimacy, were not good enablers in this type of war.

No competing theories, whether of material superiority, battlefield decisiveness, diplomatic inertia or war termination, are sufficient to interpret the complex behaviour and outcome of these wars, nor is the simplistic equation of direct versus indirect strategy, as proposed by Arreguin-Toft, (which supposes the irregular actor wins if the stronger adopts a direct strategy that aims to defeat the opponent militarily). [2]Israel used direct strategy in many phases but still achieved some successes when the indirect strategy of the irregular movement, whether PLO or Hamas, led occasionally to poor outcome.

Finally, irregular war does not follow a specific strategic model, as force will be used in different forms and on different scales, and with different combinations of non-military means to affect different targets: the target population, the enemy, and regional and international actors. However, it aims generally to build its own capabilities to run the conflict and affect the enemy's political will to concede. Such conflicts are heavily politicised which require much closer strategic guidance of military actions. Operational art, as the sequential and cumulative effects of tactical actions to achieve intermediary objectives, does not follow a specific formula, and it entails using military and non-military paths simultaneously to achieve geographical or functional operational objectives.

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[2] Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak win Wars: A theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005)

Cross Comparisons:

Testing the theory in the Arab-Israeli Wars showed congruity in 1948 and 1973 and slight deviation in 1967, as discussed. Irregular wars were generally congruent.

In the **1948 War**, Israel's highly advantageous practical ability led to its strategic success, though its long-term grand strategic situation was negatively affected. Israel had a low advantageous practical ability in the **1967 War** which led to strategic advantage due to the sudden breakdown of the Egyptian military. In the **1973 War**, Egypt's low advantageous ability led to its relative superiority.

In the **Irregular Wars** the insurgents had a general advantageous position to start with due to the complexities that states have in fighting such wars. This was specially the case for Israel due to its bias towards militarization and tacticization of strategy.

Fighting the **PLO,** Israel had a moderate advantageous ability and got relative superiority.

The conflict with **Hezbollah** was a major soft point in Israel's strategic history, like the 1973 War. Hezbollah had advantageous practical ability which led to strategic success despite its drawbacks and the grave situation after the 2006 War resulting from its awkward strategic moves regionally.

Hamas showed a bipolar strategic attitude. Before 2006 it enjoyed a low advantageous ability and achieved relative superiority over Israel. But after 2006, due to its new situation as ruler of the Gaza strip, which was totally alien to the operational and strategic logic of irregular war, Israel had a low advantageous ability which led to its relative superiority, especially in 2014 campaign.

This study has acknowledged the role of **competing variables/theories** in facilitating the strategic ability to achieve political winning in wars, either directly as being a mean of power or indirectly (by creating favourable conditions for strategy to exploit for military victory).

These competing theories are quantitative advantages including economic and fighting capabilities; qualitative advantages including resort, societal development and operational art; military victory itself, efficient diplomatic techniques especially for war termination; and the degree of asymmetry between regular and irregular actors fighting each other.

The presence or absence of these actors might affect the ability to achieve military objectives or the ability to translate them into political success. However as this study has shown, the outcomes of the Arab-Israeli wars cannot be attributed to these factors in all cases, as they are either silenced (in regular wars there is no place for an explanation based on asymmetric strategy) or can be part of our offered theory (as the lack of diplomatic competence and proper war termination); or have a reverse relationship with the war outcome or be grossly incongruent with it (military victory and quantitative or qualitative superiority).

(1) **Material advantage**: The Arabs had a moderate advantage in this sphere in the 1967 War and low advantage in the 1973 War, but the political and military outcomes were reversed (total failure in 1967 and relative superiority for Egypt in 1973). In the three asymmetric wars Israel had high material advantage over the irregulars but generally poor political outcomes. Israel also had a low material status vis-à-vis

Arabs at the beginning of 1948 War but its enhancement later was a sign of competent strategy.

(2) **Quality measures advantage**: Israel had a moderate advantage in the 1967 War and low advantage in 1973 but reversed the political outcomes. It had a high qualitative advantage in the three asymmetric wars but differing political outcomes. Israel's high advantage in 1948 was a facilitating factor for the war outcome but this can in fact only be explained by competent strategy in building fighting ability and its derivatives.

(3) **Military victory:** Israel's high-scale military victory in the later phase of the 1948 and 1967 Wars and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and her operational advantage in the concluding phase of the 1973 War, were totally incongruent to the political outcomes of these wars (apart from the 1948 War which was a component and result of its excellent strategic performance).

(4) **Poor diplomatic measures**: Israel had poor diplomatic techniques in 1967 and the Attrition wars but the political outcomes were not matching. Its diplomatic techniques were moderate in 1973 due to Cold War dynamics and Sadat's personal aberration which compensated Israel's natural weakness in this area, but the political outcome was not totally matching. In the 1948 War, diplomacy was also moderate but its purpose was to serve the war efforts. In the irregular wars, the failure to offer a political alternative and containment to end the conflict and delegitimize the insurgents, and build a stable order, can be considered at first sight due to diplomatic weakness. However, it is related essentially to a bankrupt strategic approach which did not only prevented diplomacy from carrying out its mission but also undid initial diplomatic achievements (such as in breaking down Oslo Accords whose success would totally delegitimize the insurgents' case).

(5) **Asymmetric War**: This does not explain the suboptimum political outcome in the regular wars of 1967, Attrition and 1973 in spite of military prowess. The failure to appreciate strategic logic and practical requirements in asymmetric wars is a sign of a general strategic weakness. But, admittedly, this Israeli weakness was aggravated by the complexity of this kind of war, as mentioned above.

(6) **War termination**: This has a role in explaining how wars ended, but the strategic defects in the early stages of the wars of 1967 and 1973 and in Lebanon in 1982 affected the later stages and outcomes to the extent that a sound war termination was not possible. Notwithstanding, war termination is still a critical component in strategy making in war whether in the short term, or in paving the way to its long-term conclusion.

This demonstration of the very limited ability of competing theories to explain the war outcomes shows the need to advance a new theory with more interpretive power. This theory does not necessarily contradict the others; rather it may adopt them within its own structure. More importantly, however, it explains their discontinuity in affecting the war outcomes.

This theory proposes that the advantageous practical strategic ability of the state and state actors to generate sound strategies that aim at affecting the will of the enemy in order to achieve their political aims, and to mould the operational art and conduct to strategic perspective, is decisive in reaching the political winning of the war in its immediate aftermath.

The theory also proposes that practical strategic ability is generally a reflection of the conceptual ability of strategy makers to have a valid strategic logic and the institutional ability to keep a functioning link between political and military leaders.

However, two remarks should be added which make our theoretical formula far from being mechanical.

Firstly, strategic logic and ability are limited by conditioning variables such as geography, culture, society, and regime type. As has been shown, the Israeli obsession with decisive and short battles of annihilation, which leads in turn to the problem of “tacticization” of strategy, is not fully understood without acknowledging the geographical, economical, regime-type and societal factors. The same applies to the Arabs, and this can explain their limitations in mobilizing their human and economic resources and improving the social/industrial requirement for competent military power, especially in high industrial war.

Strategic ability should address material and qualitative strength or weakness, cultural biases, diplomatic sensitivities and the type of war whether regular or irregular. Then, it either attempts to manipulate these factors to align them with strategic requirements, or it modifies the political ends altogether to reflect a sound means-ends-ways calculus of strategy.

Secondly, as stated in the discussion of the 1967 war, the effect of each element in strategic ability may pay off differently in each war depending on the type of war and the strategic effect required. There is also interdependence between strategic variables which prove to be facilitating or obstructing to each other.

Final Remarks

The main argument of this thesis is twofold: firstly -- having an advantageous strategic ability in the practical layer (sound strategies and guiding operational art and capability) leads to advantageous war outcome in the short aftermath of war over a scale of grades. If a state or non-state actor loses the war politically in spite of military prowess this is due to weak strategic ability rather than any other reason.

Second -- the degree of competence in the conceptual and institutional tiers of strategic ability should be reflected in the practical strategic tier. However, this pathway is shaped, facilitated or obstructed by conditioning variables such as the personal competence and/or aberrations of leaders, the reactive nature of war, in which the *enemy has a vote*, and the regional and international players as well as dimensional constraints in geography, culture, society and regime type.

In the applied aspect of this research, **Israel** showed a consistently ***weak strategic ability*** in the 1967 and 1973 Wars and the Irregular Wars, and this explains the comparatively small political gains it won despite its outstanding battle-space decisiveness. Only in 1948 was the high grade of Ben-Gurion's conceptual and institutional abilities rewarded in the war outcome.

The **Arabs** (to use an admittedly heterogeneous and dynamic term) have been shown to suffer malfunctioning political and social dimensions which have prevented their huge human and natural resources (together with a long thread of suffering and sacrifice) from being channelled into operational counter-capabilities or strategic ability. Only in the first stage of the 1973 War and in the case of Hezbollah specifically, has the modest development in Arab strategic ability been sufficient to expose Israel's consistent weakness in strategy making which has otherwise been concealed by the hugely incompetent Arab performance.

However, rather than advancing a theory linking strategic ability and the winning of wars in a deterministic way, this study has intended **to contribute to a wider understanding in the field of strategic studies** regarding three issues: the theoretical underpinnings of strategic logic and performance, methodological questions of how the generation of strategy can best be studied, and how these developing approaches can be applied to explain the complexity of the Arab-Israeli Wars.

It offers a framework to deal with the phenomenon of strategy while engaging with ongoing debates in the field that challenged its basic assumptions: how war generally is used to achieve the ends of policy, how we define and measure the success of war while not confusing this success with any definition of tactical or operational victory, and understanding what the elements of **strategic logic** are.

The study has focused on Clausewitz's formula for success in war being the use of war to ***affect the opponent's will,*** and it has differentiated between two types of war depending on how far this will was intended to be modified. In war with total aims, political success is only achievable by destroying the enemy's political system via the demolition of its centre of gravity, which should be understood in very contextual and variable way. In war with limited aims, the political behaviour of the enemy/opponent is altered by affecting its calculation, security and its level of conviction of the probability of winning.

This will-change is achieved through ***strategic effect -*** which is the net effect of manipulating all military and non-military strategy means - on the will of the enemy so that the political aims are met. It is shown that strategic effect is a non-material currency related to will-change, and therefore involves considerable complexity.

This study also offers theoretical supplements in attempting to resolves some of the ongoing debates in strategic studies.

It showed that the concepts of an ***operational level of war and operational art*** are practical, instructional and analytical necessities that should be addressed in a flexible and contextually sensitive way. For example, the levels of war work by channelling means to achieve ends but not with a sharp or sealed demarcation between them. The highest level of strategy is policy and its lowest level tends to be operations. The study concludes that no permanent and static model of operational art can be offered, but that it evolves over time with the changing characteristics of war and cases. Operational art should be strategically guided, contextually relevant and promoting jointness.

The study also dealt with another two important issues.

The first is how ***political-military relations and functions*** are best organised and whether there is a solid formula for "ideal" civil-military relations or whether they should be functionally oriented and contextually relevant to each specific case, as the study advocates. The functional criteria of the institutional layer include information sharing and critical thinking in the decision-making process in investigating all options and scenarios. Political supremacy should be preserved, but as the study emphasises, the military's ability to offer professional advice and undertake operational tasks with autonomy is also to be respected. The political level has the right to intervene in all operational and tactical moves, but should confine itself to those with strategic significance.

However, political-military relations have more complex requirements than advancing a specific relational framework; they are a product of political, sociological, cultural and strategic developments of the state and non-state actors. Nevertheless, there is usually a "competent", rather than ideal, structure compatible with the prevailing socio-political settings which results in a balance of power that enables the institution to perform the required functions.

The second important issue is that ***guiding the fighting capabilities*** has to be under the close eye of the strategists. This fighting power does not simply evolve in a linear fashion, or even only to counter that of the enemy, but it has to fit the "strategic" mission, which can and should vary over time. From the strategic perspective guiding fighting ability is composed of **two tasks** as shown earlier: *providing strategic assumptions* about the mission on which operational capability should be modelled, and *overall guidance for the proportional military capability* vis-à-vis the enemy. The strategic leadership may delegate many of the details of the second role, albeit being politically responsible anyway, but its role in the first task is utterly indispensable. The fingerprints of this task can be traced, as this study shows patiently in the regular and irregular Arab-Israeli wars, in the four dimensions of fighting power: doctrinal, organisational, human and material. Strategic insight, or its absence, is shown to affect each component of "fighting power", from the complex articulation of operational art at the upper operational level, where different arms (ground/air/air-defence/navies/Special Forces/nuclear) may be used to enhance or avoid those of the self and enemy, to modify the Soviet doctrine by Egyptians to suit the new strategic mission of a war with limited aims, or modifying the operational and tactical art and structures swiftly under fire by Israelis to adapt to the battlefield surprises in 1973, to the minute detail of the infantryman's load.

Methodologically, the study emphasises the importance of keeping a balance between the eternal governing principles of strategy and its contextualization depending on the situation of the specific case. Ignoring the first risks uprooting the analysis from the strategic thinking base in favour of technological and practical facades and neologisms. Ignoring the second would ossify strategy making, leaving it unable to respond to changes in the environment. Hence, for example, ***irregular wars*** have unique characteristics that affect the way strategic logic is applied, and its contextualization is taken a step further depending on the specific case, but this two-step "contextualization" is not at the expense of the basic logic, the neglect of which would result in a chaotic and misleading understanding. The assumption behind this thesis is that strategic logic is the same in all wars (nature) in the abstract, but what varies is its contextualization in age and cases (characters).

The value of examining history in this sense, adding its exemplary value to ideas and concepts, is not to formulate a determinist or positive theory, and certainly not formulate specific directions for action, but to *refine provisional theoretical assumptions* about war and strategy. The result would be a well formed theory - but far from a doctrine - to guide the strategist in his/her way of intellectual self-development. Strategic theory in this sense is to guide the strategist's *praxis*[3]*;* the internalization and refining of theoretical and practical abilities, rather than practice. And critical analysis of history would be dealing with understanding historical phenomenon through better-prepared questions, and developing habits of minds to improve the ability to find answers. But the purpose is not to pick up lessons on detailed practice, apart from emphasising those related to the general strategic level and showing their variable contextualization.

This methodological attitude is essential in dealing with the main concept of this thesis, "Strategic ability". This is a new analytical framework that the study offers and it has wide practical applications. The "fighting power" framework on which some Western doctrines have been based is efficient when dealing with the operational level of war (how military means are used to achieve military objectives), but it turns out to be insufficient when dealing with the strategic level of war (how military and non-military means are used to achieve political aims).

In addition to its analytical value in explaining why state and non-state actors perform better or worse in wars, "strategic ability" offers strategy-makers a tool to measure, organise and review the components of their strategic performance, while keeping cause and effect clear. “Fighting power” is a tool that should be manipulated and shaped by strategy to achieve the ends of policy. Strategic faults are much harder to repair than those at operational and tactical levels. Moreover, as the hard lessons of the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown, “tactical superiority is likely to prove disastrous when strategy is weak or policy is ill judged: soldiers would be doing the wrong things well, and for the wrong reasons”.[4]

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[3] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.90 and Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).*

Strategic Ability should not be considered a directive method with a determinist or predictive value; it is rather a framework of analysis to guide the strategist’s mind in approaching the strategic system holistically, by evaluation, reviewing or reforming. He/she should be able to ask the right questions rather than relying on sharp answers, which can be very contextual.

Studying the Arab-Israeli Wars has been especially beneficial from this aspect. Adding to its value in refining the theoretical assumptions of this study and helping to explain these wars strategically, it illuminates the practical dilemmas which make the pathway from theory to practice very elusive. Strategic principles, as linking means-ways-ends or political supremacy and the military’s role in strategy making, or guiding the military art and conduct to be attuned to strategy requirements, though they are many times missed conceptually, most of the time are hard to maintain and apply in the shattering atmosphere of war and conflict. But only the strong grasp of concepts, in addition to institutional and practical prudence and resilience can help. History is very informative in this sense also, as Sumida indicates; it educates the strategists’ subconscious to expect these practical dilemmas.[5]

States which have all these lessons in mind regarding the crucial place of thinking strategically, dealing with history in a critical and inquisitive but non-prescriptive way, and which hold a valid strategic theory and a sound framework of analysis, can do better in managing their armed forces in the context of war while avoiding dramatic mistakes or dealing with them appropriately if they happen.

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[4] Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) pp.19-20

[5] Jon Tetsuro Sumida. “The Relationship of History and Theory on War: The Clausewitzian Ideal and Its Implications”. *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. **65,** No. 2 (April 2001) pp. 333-354.

In examining the British political-military command failures in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Christopher Elliott, effectively showed how institutional flawed settings, especially at the political-military interface, the high military command and the higher defence management levels, precluded the operation of the basic strategic functions. However, improving institutions to work efficiently would only be possible if guided by sound theoretical assumptions on how strategy works. Moreover, even institutional competence would be insufficient if not anchored by people thinking strategically, or as Elliott summarised "the cry should not be for more *strategists*, but for the military elite to think more *strategically*". "One way to build strategy as a core instinct in officers would be to have specific education in the subject".[6] This can only be achievable by educating strategic theory to both political and military leaders, and studying history strategically without falling into the common preoccupying and reductionist misuses of history lessons.

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[6] Christopher Elliott, High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars (London: Hurst & Company, 2015, pp.232-233.

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