

To Safeguard a Nation: Examining the Shifting Nature of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and its Effects on the Application of Operational Art

A Monograph

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Abstract

To Safeguard a Nation: Examining the Shifting Nature of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and its Effects on the Application of Operational Art, by MAJ James R. Hoskins, US Army, 50 pages.

This project in the research field of military and operational studies explores the impact of the nature of a conflict on the use of operational art by examining the events of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The analysis concludes that as the nature of the conflict changes, the emphasis of operations changes which causes a change in the application of operational art. This project agrees with doctrine that changes in the nature and objectives of war require a reframing of the elements of operational art utilized by planners. However, it goes beyond current doctrine to conclude that some elements of operational art require added thought while some are deemphasized and even ignored when the nature of conflict is equivalent to the phases found in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

This monograph consulted several primary and secondary sources covering the conflict to establish the context and chronology of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The collection of sources fell into three broad categories of operational art, biographies, and histories of Israel and the war. A study of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war provides a unique opportunity to explore which elements of operational art the artist emphasizes during the three distinct phases. This project provides an overview of the problem, examines three case studies, compares the three case studies, then derives conclusions applicable to the US Army and future operational planners.

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Acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| ADRP | Army Doctrine Reference Publication |
| ALA | Arab Liberation Army |
| COG | Center of Gravity |
| FM | Field Manual |
| HGS | Haganah General Staff |
| IDF | Israeli Defense Force |
| IZL | Irgun Zvai Leumi (Jewish paramilitary during the civil war) |
| JA | Jewish Agency |
| JP | Joint Publication |
| LSCO | Large-Scale Combat Operations |
| LOC | Line of Communication |
| LEHI | Lohami Herut Yisrael (Jewish paramilitary during the civil war) |
| OPN | Operation |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNGAR | United Nations General Assembly Resolution |
| UNSCOP | United Nations Special Committee on Palestine |
| US | United States |

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Introduction

The United States cannot guarantee the type or location of its next conflict. A review of US military history reveals a variety of conflicts over the last one hundred years. Intervention in civil wars within South American at the turn of the 20th century, large-scale combat operations (LSCO) during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm, stability operations in Bosnia and Kosovo all saw the US commit troops and resources into varied environments. In addition to LSCO and stability operations, the US has responded to humanitarian crises at home and abroad after natural disasters and famine. The uncertainty of the global environment requires commanders and planners who understand how the elements of operational art can contribute to victory across a range of conflicts. US Army and Joint doctrine give guidance on the application of operational art. US Army doctrine states that operational art is flexible in its application and varies on the situation; it is not meant to be a checklist of elements that a planner employs.¹ Scrutiny of historical examples propose elements that necessitate added consideration based on the nature of the conflict. This project explores how the shifting nature and aims of a war determine which aspects of operational art commanders and planners emphasize to achieve their objectives and which, if any, they may ignore.

This project examines the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and extrapolates lessons for the employment of operational art. The research for this project centered on identifying how the changing nature and objectives of war impact the application of operational art and which elements the operational artist employs. The analysis concludes that as the nature of the conflict changes, the emphasis of operations changes which causes a change in the application of operational art. The emphasis of Israel's operations shifted during the war from territory during the civil war, to the enemy during the conventional war, and then back to territory during the

¹ US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Print Office, 2017), 2-1.

pending ceasefire phase. This project agrees with doctrine that changes in the nature and objectives of war require a reframing of the elements of operational art utilized by planners. But it goes beyond current doctrine to conclude that some elements of operational art require added thought while some are deemphasized and even ignored when the nature of conflict is equivalent to the phases found in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Analysis from this project suggests that during a civil war the highlighted elements of operational art are basing and operational reach while culmination and center of gravity (COG) are subordinate. During a conventional war, all elements of operational art are present but basing, tempo, and phasing and transitions require added attention. In a pending ceasefire, the elements of tempo and end state are critical, while culmination and operational reach are ignored.

Definitions

This project offers two areas for clarity and explanation; operational art and use of terminology. This project uses ADRP 3-0's, *Operations*, definition of operational art as its foundation. ADRP 3-0 defines operational art "as the cognitive approach by commanders and staffs- supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment- to develop operations to organize and employ military forces."² ADRP 3-0 further defines ten elements that constitute operational art.³ Operational art serves as an intellectual framework, a way to critically think about arranging operations aligned with resources to achieve strategic aims.⁴ The ability to think about the elements of operational art and creative methods to utilize them is vital to planners.

² US Army, *ADRP 3-0*, (2017), 2-1.

³ The ten elements of operational art are; end state and conditions, the center of gravity, decisive points and spaces, lines of operations and lines of effort, operational reach, culmination, basing, tempo, phasing and transitions, and risk. Further definitions and discussion of the elements are found in *ADRP 3-0*, 2-4 to 2-10.

⁴ John Andreas Olsen and Martin Van Creveld, *The Evolution of Operational Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 224.

When discussing the pre-state period, this project uses the term Yishuv which refers to the organized Jewish communities of Palestine mandate and its allies. This project use the terms Israel and Israeli when discussing operations after the declaration of the State of Israel. This project chooses to apply British or Israeli spelling for settlement identification throughout its analysis when discussing actions and troop movements. The decision to use these terms does not confirm or deny any claims to the territory described or deny the existence of alternative names present in other languages. The choice in vocabulary is solely to add clarity and uniformity of the information provided in both text and maps.

Literature Review

The literature consulted during this project falls into three broad categories of operational art, biographies, and histories of Israel and the war. The first category of literature contains items concerning the theory and application of operational art. Scholarly publications on the theory of operational art include Shimon Naveh's, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* and John Andreas Olsen and Martin Van Creveld, *The Evolution of Operational Art*. These documents provided further understanding concerning theories and evolution of operational art.⁵ The research examined current US doctrine such as; ADRP 3-0, ADRP 5-0, FM 3-0, JP 5-0, and others. These doctrinal manuals currently define operational art for the US military but lack material on how the context and nature of war impact the application of operational art.⁶

The second category of literature included biographies which provided insights into decisions made during the war. Memoirs such as David Ben-Gurion's, *Israel: Years of challenge* and *Israel: A Personal History*, Yigal Allon's, *The Making of Israel's Army* and Mordechai Bar-

⁵ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory*, The Cummings Center series 7 (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997); Olsen and Van Creveld, *The Evolution of Operational Art*.

⁶ US Army, *ADRP 3-0*, (2017); US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012).

on's, *Remembering 1948*, provided the project with an insight into the thoughts of actors at the national and operational level.⁷ Lastly, Oded Negbi's, a private in the war on the southern front, personal reflections provided insights into tactical actions. The biographies provided background for decisions and intent but did not explain how the nature of the war shaped the elements of operational art.

The third category of literature contains accounts of the history of Israel and the war. Researching both Arab and Israeli views enriched the context and understanding surrounding actions during the war, aiding the analysis. Books such as Chaim Herzog's, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East*, Benny Morris', *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*, Edgar O'Balance's, *The Arab-Israeli War, 1948*, and Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* provided vital information on the war to include a description of chronology, significant battles, and the views of the participating nations.⁸ Though highly detailed, these works explained the entire war instead of concentrating on the southern front.

The literature provided an understanding of what operational art is, a chronology of events surrounding the entire war, and insight into the thought process of decision makers. Missing from the literature was the relationship between the nature of the conflict and how it impacts the use of operational art. The changing context of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war required a reframing of operational art to determine which elements were critical and how to apply them.

⁷ David Ben-Gurion, *Israel: Years of Challenge* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963); David Ben-Gurion, *Israel: A Personal History*, ed. Nechemia Meyers and Miklos Pinther (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1971); Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army* (New York: Universe Books, 1970); Mordechai Bar-on, "Remembering 1948," in *Making Israel*, ed. Benny Morris (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

⁸ Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East*, (New York: Random House, 1982); Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Edgar O'Ballance, *The Arab-Israeli War, 1948* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956); Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991*, Studies in war, society, and the military (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

Methodology

The opening phase of the research investigated the origins and definition of operational art to establish a common language for the project. History, theories, and definitions of operational art were gathered from various authors and current US military doctrine to provide comprehension, setting the foundation for the analysis of the three case studies. The second phase of the project sought to understand the changing nature of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war using primary sources such as memoirs by Yigal Allon, Mordechai Bar-on, personal reflections from Oded Negbi, and secondary sources such as books by Chaim Herzog and Benny Morris. Sources referenced helped to acquire a general chronology, description of events, and the intent of relevant actors.

The project then conducted a comparative analysis of the three case studies. The next step overlaid the results of each case study against one another to determine patterns and extract lessons useful to the US Army and other planners. Additionally, this phase of the research compared the findings of the case studies to US military doctrine to determine potential gaps and lessons. The closing step in this project included the identification of significant observations beyond the scope of the research question that merit future analysis and discussion.

Due to the limitations of time and space, the research centered on actions on the southern front between Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. This project divides the 1948 Arab-Israeli war into three phases a civil war, conventional war, and pending ceasefire. This division allows a more in-depth investigation into actions and identifying similarities, differences, and emphasis of operational art elements. The civil war started in late November 1947 with the announcement of UN Resolution 181. The term civil war applies to this phase because of the internal nature of the conflict. The fighting featured the Yishuv and the Arabs vying for control of contested territory and key LOCs within the partitioned areas of Palestine. This phase ends on May 14, 1948 the evening before the Arab invasion.

The second phase, conventional war, began on May 15, 1948 with the invasion of the Arab coalition. This case study defines the term conventional war as a conflict between two, or more states, employing its uniformed armed forces in battle. The critical change during this phase is that the State of Israel fought against armies from the Arab countries, not militias. This case study further breaks down the conventional war phase into sub-phase one (May 15-July 17, 1948) and sub-phase two (July 18, 1948-January 8, 1949). During the first sub-phase, Israel concentrated its efforts on the defense as it sought to defend against invasion. During the second sub-phase, Israel transitioned to the offense and aimed to defeat the Egyptian Army. This phase ends on January 8, 1949 with the conclusion of Operation Horev.

The final phase was that of a pending ceasefire, beginning on January 9, 1949. During this phase of the war, the parties were negotiating terms of a ceasefire, while still jockeying for positions of advantage. Israel's desire to gain additional territory and a position of strength during negotiations served as the genesis for its continued operations. The delineation of a third phase is necessary because of the noticeable alteration in Israel's use of operational art. This phase ends with the signing of the final armistice agreement with Syria on July 20, 1949.

Chapter One: Civil War

Decades of violence and instability between the Jewish and Arab populations existed in Palestine before the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Significant events such as the 1921 Jaffa riots, 1936 Arab Revolt, and World War II had an impact on relations in the region.⁹ After World War II, the British ruled Palestine Mandate, but instability led the international community to seek a change. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) suggested separating Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish.¹⁰ On November 29, 1947 the United Nations passed United Nations General Assembly Resolution (UNGAR) 181 officially partitioning Palestine,

⁹ Jacob Stoil, "'Friends' and 'Patriots': A Comparative Study of Indigenous Force Cooperation in the Second World War" (PhD dissertation, Worcester College, University of Oxford, 2015), 26-27.

¹⁰ Herbert Feis, *The Birth of Israel* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1969), 40.

depicted in figure 1.¹¹ The British government accepted the resolution, agreeing to withdraw its troops by May 15, 1948. Arab militias in Palestine responded immediately after the announcement of the UN resolution with attacks on Jewish settlements, thus starting the civil war on November 30, 1947.¹²

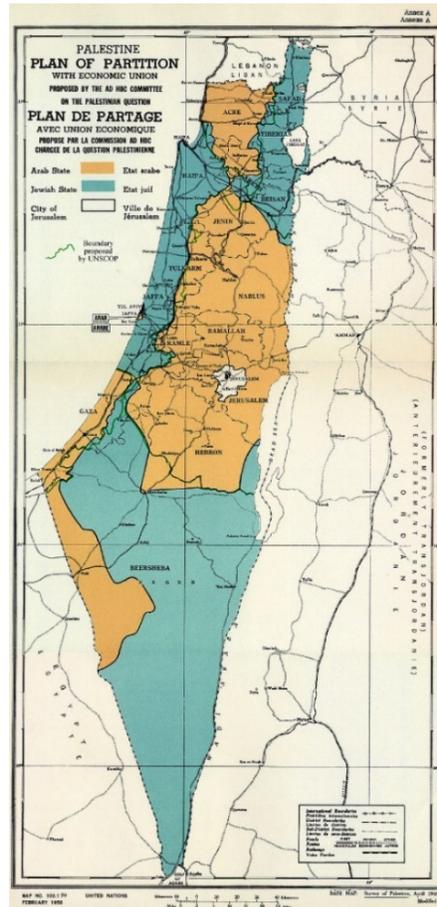


Figure 1. UNGAR 181 Partition Plan. United Nations Digital Library, Palestine: Plan of Partition Annex A to resolution 181 (II) of the General Assembly, (New York: United Nations, 1947), accessed March 28, 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/409073?ln=en>.

This case study scrutinizes the Yishuv’s use of operational art to secure territory and defeat Arab forces during the civil war phase of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The results of the analysis conclude that during the civil war phase, basing was the critical element emphasized by

¹¹ Efraim Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Palestine War 1948* (Oxford: Osprey, 2002), 9.

¹² Elad Ben-Dror, “The United Nations Plan to Establish an Armed Jewish Force to Implement the Partition Plan (United Nations Resolution 181),” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 4 (December 2013): 563.

Yishuv forces allowing them to retain its territory and secure potential enemy invasion routes.

Figure 2 depicts seven months of the civil war analyzed in this case study.

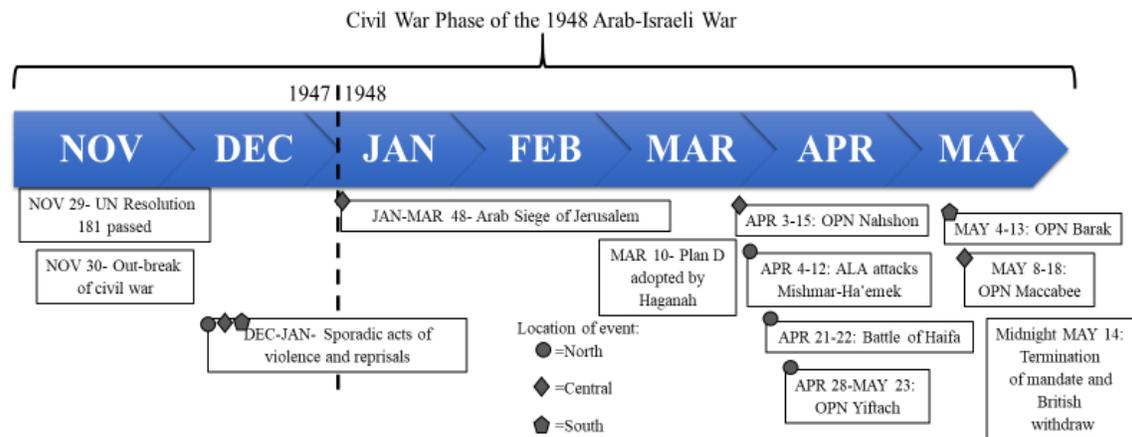


Figure 2. Timeline of the Civil War Phase. Created by the author using information from Efraim Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Palestine War 1948* (Oxford: Osprey, 2002), 9-12; Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, Cambridge Middle East studies 15 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), ix-x.

Yishuv and Arab Forces

Providing for the Yishuv's defense was the Haganah, a militia established in the 1920s consisting of two different forces; 20,000 troops used to garrison its settlements, and 2,000 in the Palmach.¹³ Due to its training and mobility, the special operations trained Palmach was the best force available within the Haganah.¹⁴ The Jewish Agency (JA), a representative body of the Yishuv (Jewish Community of Palestine Mandate), controlled and set objectives for the Haganah.¹⁵ Other forces such as Lohamei Herut Yisrael (LEHI) and the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL) protected Yishuv settlements and conducted offensive actions against the Arab population. These

¹³ The exact number of troops within the Haganah is uncertain. The number varies depending on the source and methods used to count active members. The source data for the number of troops in this project comes from Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Palestine War 1948*, 25.

¹⁴ Morris, *1948*, 86.

¹⁵ Steven Wagner, "British Intelligence and the Jewish Resistance Movement in the Palestine Mandate, 1945-46," *Intelligence and National Security* 23, no. 5 (October 2008): 631.

organizations had similar aims but did not respond directly to the JA or consistently coordinate their efforts with the Haganah.¹⁶

Arab forces consisted of local militias and the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) who did not have a centralized command structure to coordinate efforts. The ALA was led by Syrian officers but drew upon volunteers from across the Arab League. The ALA had around 5,000 troops equipped with small arms, armored cars, and limited artillery.¹⁷ During the civil war phase, the Arab League relied on the ALA to act as its proxy within Palestine to carry out its objectives.¹⁸

Yishuv and Arab Intent

The Yishuv adopted a defensive strategy in 1947, centered on two goals: securing Jewish territory and potential Arab invasion routes. The Yishuv directed the Haganah to defend Jewish territory and to occupy Arab towns along possible invasion routes to deny their use to enemy forces.¹⁹ Securing towns along potential invasion routes was the critical task for both the Yishuv and Arab forces because it caused the collapse of enemy forces within the surrounding area as it separated forces in the field from their supplies.²⁰ While localized fighting occurred between Yishuv and Arab forces throughout the partitioned territory, figure 3 depicts the areas of major Yishuv operations during the civil war highlighting its efforts to secure major LOCs and key towns, cities, or kibbutzim.

¹⁶ David Cesarani, “The War on Terror That Failed: British Counter-Insurgency in Palestine 1945–1947 and the ‘Farran Affair’,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (October 2012): 663.

¹⁷ Morris, *1948*, 91.

¹⁸ Amiram Ezov, “Arab Army vs. a Jewish Kibbutz: The Battle for Mishmar Ha’emek, April 1948,” *Israel Affairs* 22, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 99.

¹⁹ Ben-Gurion, *Israel: Years of Challenge*, 33.

²⁰ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 33.

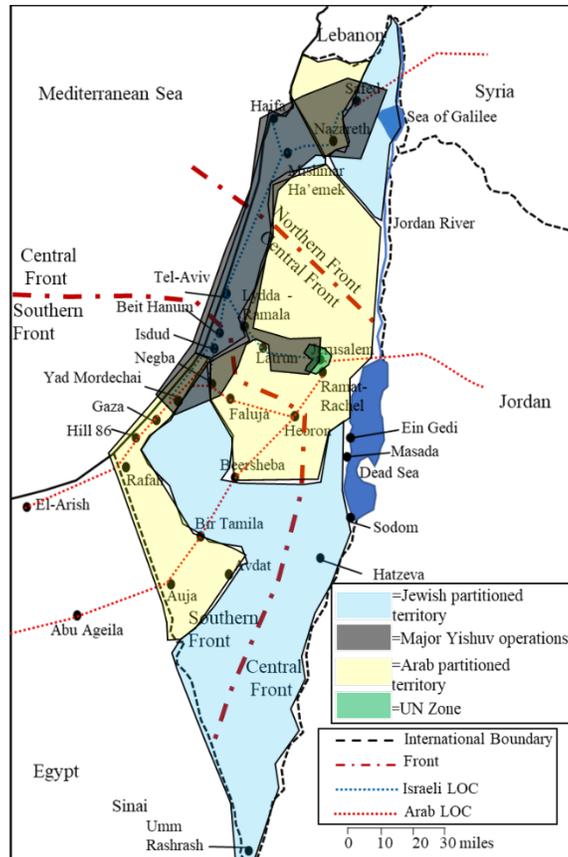


Figure 3. Significant Yishuv Operations Overlaid Against Partitioned Territory. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Israel Map*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for partition from United Nations Digital Library. *Palestine: Plan of Partition Annex A to resolution 181 (II) of the General Assembly*. (New York: United Nations, 1947), accessed March 28, 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/409073?ln=en>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*.

Arab militias concentrated their efforts on the protection of critical areas within the UN partitioned Arab territory, such as roads and fortified outposts. The primary objective of the Arab League was the destruction of Yishuv forces and securing lines of communication (LOC) to support its planned invasions.²¹ To retain global legitimacy, the Arab League used the ALA as a

²¹ Abdul Said and Alain Sportiche, "Requirements for a Stable Peace: Arab and Israeli Images," in *Israel, the Middle East, and U.S. Interests*, ed. Harry S. Allen and Iván Völgyes (New York: Praeger, 1983), 21.

proxy force to fight its war in Palestine before its attack, so it did not violate the UN Resolution.²² Underneath the guise of its narrative of defending fellow Arabs, the members of the Arab League positioned themselves to gain power, land, and resources using the plight of the Palestinian Arabs as justification.²³

Significant Events

From the Yishuv's perspective, there were three fronts to the war, the northern, central, and southern fronts. While the fronts are geographically distinct, the operations have similar characteristics in their intent and execution. The Yishuv considered the southern front as an economy of force mission. As such, the limited number of actions on the southern front requires an exploration of the Yishuv's operations across Palestine to extrapolate lessons on operational art. From December 1947 until April 1948, the war featured localized attacks from all forces in Palestine.²⁴ During these five months, the Haganah adopted a defensive strategy. The Haganah General Staff (HGS) created Plan Dalet, to defend Jewish settlements and secure potential invasion routes of Arab forces on the northern front.²⁵ Its success led to comparable operations along all fronts throughout the civil war. Figure 4 depicts significant operations of the civil war analyzed in this case study.

²² Joshua Landis, "Syria and the Palestine War," in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, Cambridge Middle East studies 15 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 193-195.

²³ Sandra Berliant Kadosh, "United States Policy toward the West Bank in 1948," *Jewish Social Studies* 46, no. 3/4 (Fall 1984): 239.

²⁴ Uri Cohen, "Unraveling the Wars of 1948," *Jewish Social Studies* 18, no. 3 (2012): 132.

²⁵ Morris, *1948*, 119.

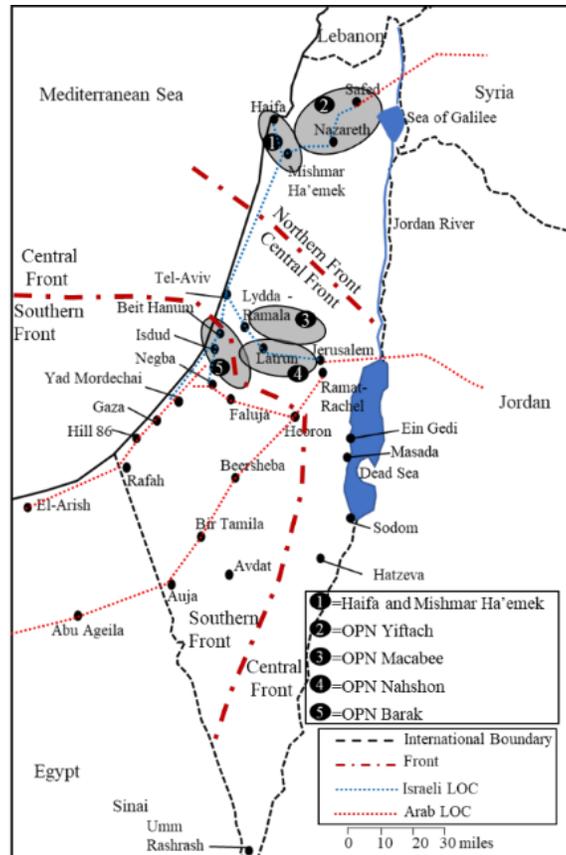


Figure 4. Map of Significant Operations During the Civil War Phase. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Israel Map*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*.

Northern Front

The Battle for Mishmar Ha'emek (April 4-12) was a defensive operation concentrated on preventing the ALA from capturing a critical location on the outskirts of Haifa. Mishmar Ha'emek is a sizeable Jewish kibbutz which commands the road to Haifa and the entrance to the Jezreel Valley. If captured, it would allow Arab forces to continue their march west and cut the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road south of Haifa.²⁶ On April 4, 1948 Haganah defenders repelled an attack from 1,000 ALA fighters at Mishmar Ha'emek. The ALA continued to attack Mishmar Ha'emek for the next several days, making small gains during the day only to lose them to Haganah

²⁶ Moshe Pearlman, *The Army of Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1950), 109.

counter-attacks at night.²⁷ To circumvent the strong ALA positions and break the siege, the Haganah attacked several surrounding towns (April 7-12) to sever the ALA's LOCs.²⁸ The Haganah's successful capture of the neighboring towns threatened the ALA with encirclement, forcing it to withdraw on April 12.²⁹ By retaining Mishmar Ha'emek, Yishuv forces prevented Arab forces from reinforcing Haifa and gaining access to the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road, from the north.

Following the victory around Mishmar Ha'emek, the Haganah launched an offensive against the mixed city of Haifa (April 21-22). The victory at Mishmar Ha'emek was a necessary precursor to operations within Haifa because it prevented Arab reinforcements from reaching the city. Haifa was operationally crucial in the eyes of the Yishuv because of its roles as a port and railroad hub. Fighting had occurred sporadically in Haifa since the announcement of UN Resolution 181.³⁰ British forces within the city prevented the violence from escalating further, but their withdrawal on April 21, 1948 provided the Haganah with an opportunity to attack the city. Intense fighting against Arab militia continued into April 22, when Haganah forces launched an attack, securing the city.³¹ Capturing the Mishmar Ha'emek kibbutz and the city of Haifa resulted in the collapse of Arab forces in the surrounding area.

Operation Yiftach (April 28-May 23), was the final significant action in the north during this phase. Operation Yiftach had two main objectives, unite upper and lower Galilee by securing Safed and destroy towns along potential Syrian and Lebanese invasion routes.³² The Haganah centered its efforts on capturing Safed, the regional capital, to unite the entire Galilee region and

²⁷ Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 45.

²⁸ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 28.

²⁹ Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 45.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

³¹ Morris, *1948*, 140,143.

³² *Ibid.*, 157.

prevent its use as a Syrian supply base during an invasion.³³ On April 30, the Haganah commenced its attack on Safed. Fighting continued until May 10 when the Haganah captured the city.³⁴ Haganah consolidation efforts continued in Galilee until May 23. The capture of Safed and other towns along the LOCs forced the ALA to withdraw, stabilizing the northern region of Palestine.

Central Front

The patterns of operations conducted on the central front were similar to those on the northern front. The central front operations aimed to defend Jerusalem and control the LOC to resupply it. Arab militia blocked the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem LOC to reduce the effectiveness of the defending Yishuv forces. On April 4 the Haganah began Operation Nahshon to open the LOC.³⁵ From April 4 through 15, a brigade from the Haganah seized towns along the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road. Despite difficulties, the brigade successfully cleared the way, allowing sixty trucks to reach Jerusalem by April 15.³⁶ Operation Nahshon opened the road to Jerusalem, but Arab forces sealed it off again in early May.³⁷

To reopen the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road, the Haganah conducted Operation Maccabee (May 8-18). Similar to Operation Nahshon, Haganah units captured towns adjacent to the road network to gain control of the LOC.³⁸ Yishuv forces advancing along the northern side of the road met stiff Arab resistance near Latrun. Despite several attempts, the Haganah was not able to

³³ Howard Morley Sachar and Iaácov Oved, *A History of Israel* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 316.

³⁴ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 33-34.

³⁵ Avi Shlaim, "Israel and the Arab Coalition in 1948," in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, Cambridge Middle East studies 15 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 86.

³⁶ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 29-30.

³⁷ Pearlman, *The Army of Israel*, 142.

³⁸ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 41.

break through the Arab defense. The Haganah established a LOC to Jerusalem by cutting a new route through the Judean Hills, circumventing the Arab position.³⁹

Southern Front

The Haganah viewed the southern front as an economy of force mission as the main effort remained on defending Jerusalem. Operations conducted on the southern front closely resemble those conducted on the northern and central fronts. During Operation Barak (May 4-13) the Haganah raced south from Tel-Aviv to secure towns before the mandate ended and the Egyptian Army invaded. Most of the towns were empty by the time the Haganah forces arrived, often being deserted just hours before with the Arab population fleeing toward Arab lines.⁴⁰ From May 4 through 13, Giv'ati and Negev brigades cleared several towns to the south and west of Tel-Aviv to expand the Yishuv's area of control.⁴¹ This operation stabilized the southern region of Palestine before the Egyptian forces invaded and solidified the Haganah's control of the southern portion of the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road.

Analysis of Operational Art

The analysis of this case study concludes that basing and operational reach are the highlighted elements of operational art, while culmination and COG are subordinate. The nature and specific conditions of the civil war forced the Yishuv to emphasize basing initially. Basing also served as the principal means of power projection to extend operational reach. Concerning the nature and specific conditions of the civil war, the noncontiguous territory and scattered towns assigned to the Yishuv through the partition presented it with a security crisis. To improve its position and capabilities, the Yishuv needed to control two LOCs, one running north-south and another running east-west. During this phase, basing refers to the use of a town, city, or kibbutz to

³⁹ Pearlman, *The Army of Israel*, 142.

⁴⁰ Bar-on, "Remembering 1948," in *Making Israel*, 43.

⁴¹ Morris, *1948*, 161-162.

house forces and supplies enabling control of the surrounding areas. Control of basing was decisive because capturing a town, city, or kibbutz led to the collapse of enemy forces within the surrounding area. One example of this was Mishmar Ha'emek. The capture of the kibbutz prevented Arab reinforcements from influencing the fight for Haifa, blocked Arab efforts to cut access to the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road, and dispelled Arab forces from the surrounding area.

Equally important is that basing served as the principal means of power projection to extend operational reach. Crucial cities such as Tel-Aviv, Haifa, and Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek provided the Yishuv with locations from which to project power during operations. Haifa and Mishmar Ha'emek served as staging locations for Yishuv forces as they advanced east to capture Safed during Operation Yiftach. From Tel-Aviv, the Yishuv pushed east to control the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road during Operation Nahshon and Maccabee. Tel-Aviv additionally functioned as the starting location for Operation Barak and its efforts to control the southern portion of the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road and the Negev. The Yishuv used basing to provide its forces with a stable foundation to project power forward into a region. These critical locations along with others across all fronts, represent the Yishuv's attempts to secure basing, consolidate its territory, and add to the capability of its forces.

During the civil war, basing was the critical element of operational art because it enhanced the Yishuv's operational reach and provided control over significant LOCs. The Yishuv's efforts concentrated on control of two major LOCs; the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road and the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road. These LOCs were critical to the fight and basing provided the Yishuv with a mechanism to control them. Protecting its own LOCs and severing the ALA LOCs became a focus of several Yishuv operations. Defining the limits of operational reach for the Yishuv and the ALA was the ability to control these LOCs.

Yishuv operations fixated on the control of friendly and enemy LOCs during the civil war because holding the road network provided an advantage over its enemies. Securing towns, cities, and kibbutzim along the LOC was the Yishuv's mechanism of control. The need to command the

Haifa-Tel-Aviv and the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road became a focal point of the Yishuv's efforts. To control its north-south LOC along the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road, the Yishuv fought the Battles of Haifa, Mishmar Ha'emek, and conducted Operation Barak. To control its east-west LOC along the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road, the Yishuv conducted Operation Nahshon and Maccabee. In the north Operation Yiftach successfully severed the ALA's LOC to Syria. This action forced the ALA to retreat and secured the Galilee region before the invasion of the Arab armies. Control of the LOCs increased the Yishuv's operational reach while simultaneously deteriorating the ALA's.

The road network and ability to control it defined the limits of operational reach for both the Yishuv and the ALA. During Operation Nahshon, the Yishuv opened the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road on April 15, but Yishuv forces did not have enough men, material, or bases to control the entirety of the road. A continuous battle between the Haganah and the ALA weakened the Yishuv's grip on the LOC. The Haganah lost control of the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road in early May, forcing the Yishuv to find an alternate route to supply its forces in Jerusalem. The limitations in equipment and manpower narrowed the Yishuv's operational reach to a sphere of influence surrounding the LOCs it controlled.

The analyses of this case lead to two critical understandings about the nature of a civil war and the application of operational art. The nature of a civil war drives basing to become the primary concern of the operational artist because it serves as a mechanism to allow other actions to occur. After securing basing, operational reach plays a critical role, increasing the capabilities of a force to extend its influence and security. By emphasizing basing and operational reach, Yishuv forces secured their territory and better prepared themselves to defend against an Arab invasion.

The Yishuv de-emphasized two elements of operational art during this phase, culmination and COG. Concerning culmination, the Yishuv viewed the conflict as an existential threat. This view led the Yishuv to deploy all forces in support of operations and not hold any in reserve. As new units formed, they deployed into the field or moved to reinforce existing forces. The Yishuv

did not emphasize COG during this phase. The need to protect Jewish territory and settlements did not allow the Yishuv to focus on one or two critical elements. While still used, these elements were subordinate to the critical elements of the phase, basing and operational reach.

This discussion leads to two lessons which are useful to operational planners. When planning operations in circumstances which parallel a civil war, securing basing should be the principal focus. Securing basing accomplishes two things: it assists in the consolidation of the area of operations and provides a location to serve as a springboard to conduct offensive operations. Basing provides a foundation for operations which allows the operational artist to emphasize other elements subsequently. Efforts to secure LOCs and protect supply routes is contingent on the ability to secure local basing. Once secured, these LOCs expand the operational reach of combat forces. The extension of operational reach increases the capabilities of friendly forces providing added flexibility and options to planners.

Chapter Two: Conventional War

On May 14, 1948, the Yishuv announced the creation of the State of Israel.⁴² The declaration of the State of Israel and the invasion by the Arab armies changed the dynamic of the war. From May 15, 1948 until January 8, 1949 Israel fought against the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon.⁴³ This case study examines Israel's use of operational art to defeat Arab armies during the conventional war phase of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The results of the analysis conclude that to defeat the Arab armies all elements of operational art were present, but the critical elements emphasized by Israel were basing, phasing and transitions, and tempo. Figure 5 depicts the nine months of the conventional war analyzed in this case study.

⁴² Herbert Feis, *The Birth of Israel* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1969), 59.

⁴³ Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, Cambridge Middle East studies 15 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), ix.

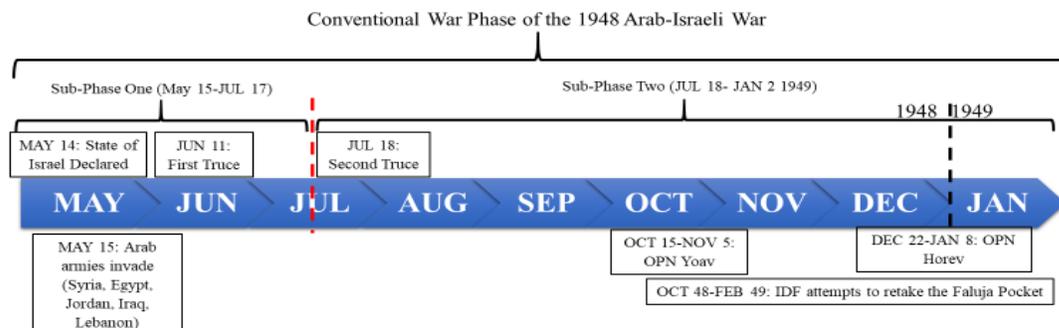


Figure 5. Timeline of the Conventional War Phase. Created by the author using information from Efraim Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 9-12; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*, ix-x.

The events of this period fall into two sub-phases; the initial invasion of the Arab armies and the Israeli counter-offensives. During the first sub-phase, Israel maintained a defensive strategy similar to the civil war, centered on retaining its territory and blocking the advance of the Arab armies. During the second sub-phase, Israel transitioned to the offense and defeated the Egyptian Army. Figure 6 depicts the separation of sub-phases one and two.

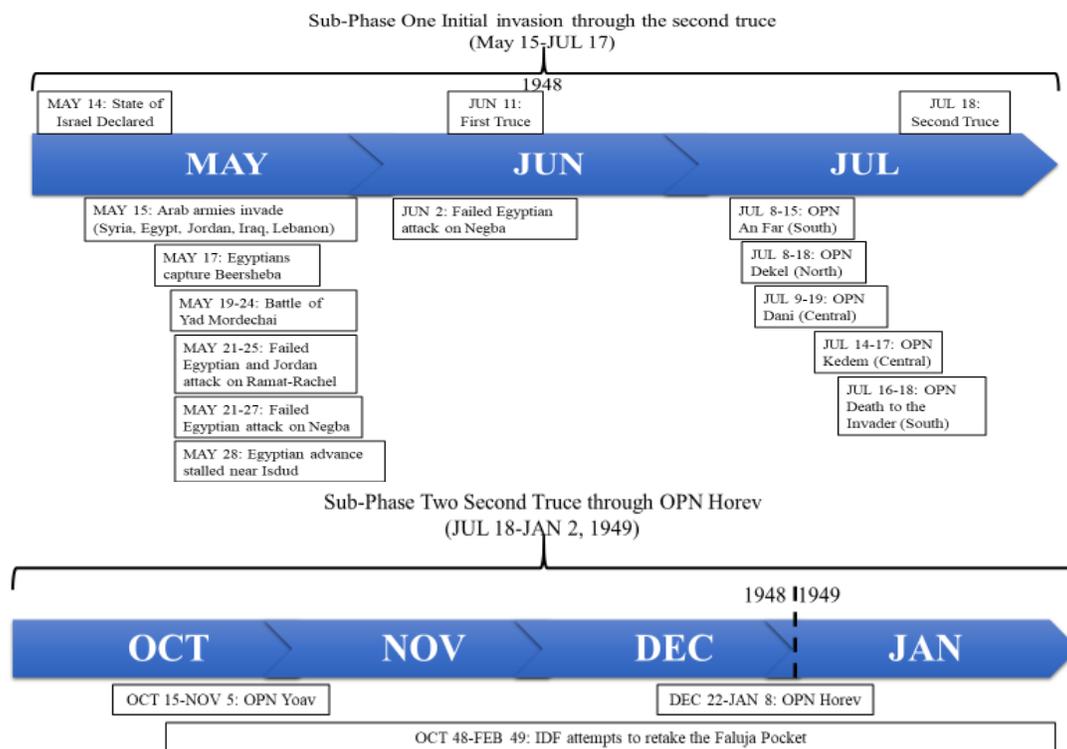


Figure 6. Sub-Phase One and Two of the Conventional War Phase. Created by the author using information from Efraim Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 9-12; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*, ix-x.

Israeli and Arab Forces

Israel's forces underwent a notable change during the period between the civil and conventional war phases. The Haganah transitioned from a militia into the Israel Defense Force (IDF). On May 31, 1948 David Ben-Gurion's order of the day called for the creation of the IDF.⁴⁴ The creation of the IDF consolidated the Haganah, Irgun, and LEHI forces into one organization with a central leadership to direct their efforts.⁴⁵ Along with reorganization, IDF recruitment and equipping efforts raised its fighting strength from 30,000 during the civil war to 65,000 by the end of June 1948.⁴⁶

The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq invaded Palestine with 22,000 troops equipped with heavy machine guns, artillery, and armored cars.⁴⁷ The 22,000 soldiers sent by the Arab states reflects the number of operational forces within Palestine, not the entirety of the Arab nation's armies. The presence of additional troops proximate to the borders of Palestine had an impact on Israeli decisions. On the southern front, Israel engaged the armies of Egypt and Jordan. The invading Egyptian army consisted of 7,000 regular soldiers and 2,000 irregular soldiers.⁴⁸ The Kingdom of Jordan's army, the Arab Legion, comprised of 4,500 soldiers led by British officers and supplied with British equipment, such as artillery and armored cars.⁴⁹

Sub-Phase One: Initial Invasion Through the Second Truce

Israel adopted a defensive strategy to survive the Arab invasion with its attention fixated on the central front. Consequently, the southern front was an economy of force mission. The Arab invasion plan directed Lebanon and Syria to attack south and west through Galilee towards Haifa.

⁴⁴ Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army*, 220.

⁴⁵ Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 56.

⁴⁶ David W. Lesch, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴⁸ Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 56.

⁴⁹ Sachar and Oved, *A History of Israel*, 322.

Iraq and Jordan would attack west through Jerusalem towards Tel-Aviv. Egypt oriented its attack north on Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem.⁵⁰ Figure 7 depicts the invasion routes of the Arab armies.

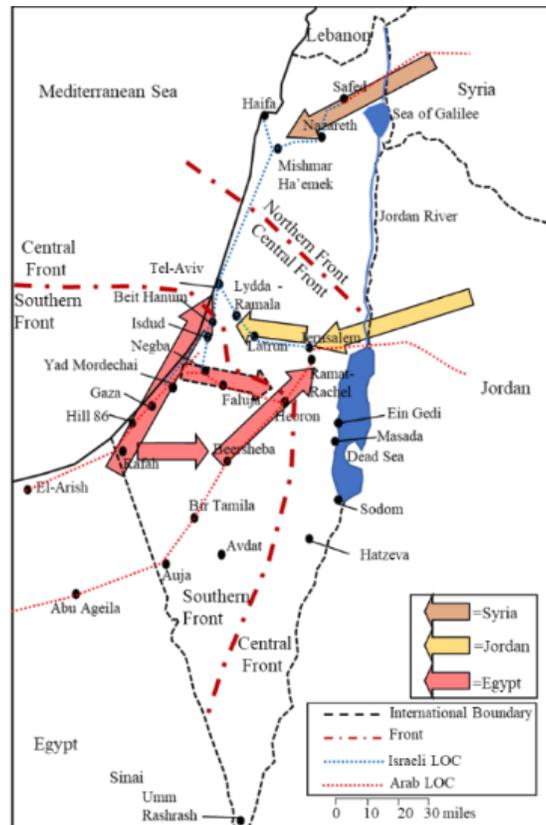


Figure 7. Map of Arab Invasion Routes During the Conventional War Phase. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, Israel Map, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*.

Egypt's Invasion

The Egyptian Army invaded Israel on May 15, 1948 along two simultaneous axes of advance, one axis advanced along the coast road towards Tel-Aviv and a second axis advanced to the east towards Beersheba.⁵¹ The Battle of Yad Mordechai (May 19-24), was the first major battle fought along the coast road. Kibbutz Yad Mordechai offered Israel a chance to delay the Egyptian advance north. On May 19, the IDF repulsed the initial Egyptian attack, inflicting heavy

⁵⁰ Sachar and Oved, *A History of Israel*, 316, 318.

⁵¹ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli*, 68.

Egyptian losses.⁵² For several days, Egyptian forces launched repeated assaults against the Kibbutz, resulting in significant losses.⁵³ Despite the heavy casualties, Egyptian commanders were determined to capture the kibbutz. Over half of the Egyptian forces advancing along the coast road would eventually take part in the attacks on Yad Mordechai.⁵⁴ On May 23, Egypt launched its final assault on the Kibbutz. Determining its defense as untenable, Israel withdrew under cover of darkness on May 23, leaving Yad Mordechai in the hands of the Egyptians.⁵⁵ The Israeli defense of Yad Mordechai provided valuable additional time for Israel to strengthen its defenses near Kibbutz Negba and the city of Isdud along the Egyptian axis of advance.

Following the Battle of Yad Mordechai, the Egyptian army advancing along the coast road split into two forces. One column headed north towards Tel-Aviv and a second moved east toward Kibbutz Negba. With the movement east, the Egyptians hoped to isolate the Negev region by linking up with the Arab Legion near Lydda and establish a LOC with Egyptian elements advancing from Beersheba.⁵⁶ The IDF denied Egypt this opportunity by defeating the Egyptian Army during the Battle of Negba (May 21-June 2). This defeat forced Egypt to move east towards Hebron and their eastern column instead of continuing north to Lydda to reinforce the Arab Legion.⁵⁷

The Battle of Isdud (May 28-June 3), represented the apex of the Egyptian advance towards Tel-Aviv.⁵⁸ For seven days 2,000 IDF and 2,500 Egyptian forces fought for control of the coast road near Isdud. The IDF blocked the Egyptian advance, preventing it from capturing its

⁵² Morris, *1948*, 237.

⁵³ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 71.

⁵⁴ Sachar and Oved, *A History of Israel*, 320.

⁵⁵ Morris, *1948*, 237.

⁵⁶ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 73.

⁵⁷ Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991*, 18.

⁵⁸ Baylis Thomas, *How Israel Was Won: A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999), 82.

primary objective, Tel-Aviv.⁵⁹ The successful defense at Isdud provided Israel with control of the southern portion of the Haifa-Tel-Aviv road, affording Israel the capability to move supplies and equipment freely between the north and south.

The eastern axis of the Egyptian advance captured Beersheba on May 17, Hebron May 20, and advancing to the outskirts of Ramat-Rachel (near Jerusalem) by May 21.⁶⁰ During the Battle for Kibbutz Ramat-Rachel (May 21-25), the Egyptian Army and the Arab Legion coordinated their attacks against the IDF. Control of the kibbutz changed hands several times throughout the battle, with the IDF gaining final control on May 25.⁶¹ With the Egyptian advance stalled at Isdud and Ramat-Rachel, Egyptian field commanders informed their high command that the army was at the limit of its operational reach and that they could not advance further without reinforcement.⁶²

Jordan's Invasion

The Arab Legion entered Palestine on May 15, 1948, and captured its first objective, the Old City of Jerusalem on May 18.⁶³ On May 20 the Arab Legion captured Latrun and its fortress overlooking the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem highway, significantly decreasing Israel's ability to resupply its forces defending Jerusalem.⁶⁴ Following the capture of Latrun and operations at Ramat-Rachel, the Arab Legion continued its advance west towards Lydda and Ramla. The Arab Legion captured Lydda and Ramala on June 1, concluding its offensive operations.⁶⁵ The Arab Legions

⁵⁹ Morris, *1948*, 239.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 184.

⁶¹ Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Best of Enemies: Israel and Transjordan in the War of 1948* (Totowa: Frank Cass, 1987), 72.

⁶² Fawaz Gerges, "Egypt and the 1948 War: Internal Conflict and Regional Ambition," in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, Cambridge Middle East studies 15 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 161.

⁶³ Ronen Yitzhak, "A Small Consolation for a Big Loss: King Abdallah and Jerusalem During the 1948 War," *Israel Affairs* 14, no. 3 (July 2008): 405.

⁶⁴ Pollack, *Arabs at War*, 274.

⁶⁵ Morris, *1948*, 231.

operations culminated with a coordinated attack with the Egyptian Army on Kibbutz Ramat-Rachel (May 21-25).

After four weeks of fighting, the UN Security Council issued a resolution on May 29 calling for a truce. The first truce went into effect on June 11, offering all sides a chance to reorganize and resupply their forces.⁶⁶ Israel's successful defensive actions before the truce led to a series of five consolidation operations across all fronts (July 8-18) to secure its position and reverse Arab gains. The consolidation operations set the necessary conditions allowing Israel to transition to offensive operations during the next sub-phase. Figure 8 depicts significant IDF actions between the first and second truce.

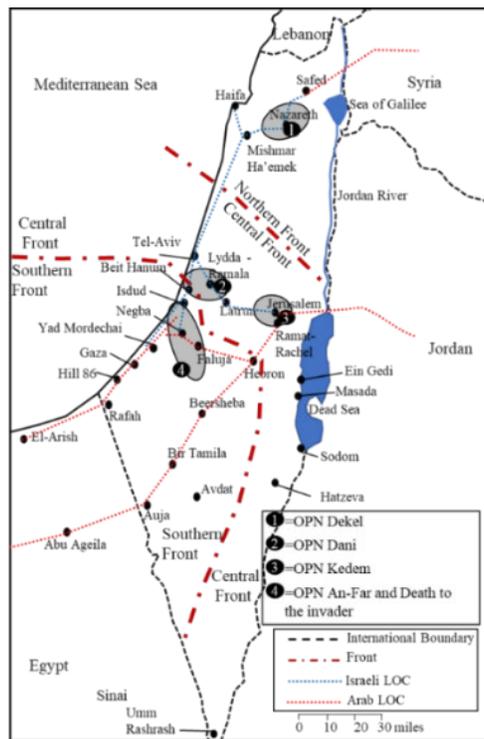


Figure 8. Map of Significant IDF Operations Between First and Second Truce. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Israel Map*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*.

⁶⁶ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 68.

On the southern front, the IDF conducted Operation An-Far (July 9-14), to open a LOC through the Egyptian positions to the Negev region.⁶⁷ Despite the initial success, the operation failed. Consequently, the IDF conducted Operation Death to the Invader (July 16-18) building upon the initial success of Operation An-Far allowing the IDF to establish a LOC to the Negev region.⁶⁸ Israel conducted similar actions on the northern and central fronts to consolidate its territory. The operations conducted during these ten days provided Israel with additional stability and confidence as it transitioned into the next sub-phase of the conventional war.

Sub-Phase Two: Second Truce Through Operation Horev

The second UN truce between Israel and the Arab nations went into effect on July 18, 1948.⁶⁹ David Ben-Gurion wanted to expel the Arab forces from Israel and to break apart the fragile Arab coalition.⁷⁰ He issued orders for the concentration forces in the south, the new main effort, pulling troops from the Jordanian theater despite the objections of senior commanders.⁷¹ Israel viewed the Egyptian Army as a threat, but one that was vulnerable. Operation Yoav (October 15-22), aimed to break the Egyptian defenses, sever their LOCs, and drive the Egyptian army out of Israel.⁷² To prevent intervention from Jordan, the IDF designed Operation Yoav to be a short and decisive operation.⁷³ Commanded by Colonel Yigal Allon, the attack centered on operations against the Faluja crossroads, the town of Beersheba, and raids along the coast road.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Morris, *1948*, 275.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁶⁹ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 87.

⁷⁰ Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army*, 37.

⁷¹ Avi Kober, "The Rise and Fall of Israeli Operational Art, 1948-2008," in *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present*, ed. John Andreas Olsen and Martin Van Creveld (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 174.

⁷² Lynne Reid Banks, *Torn Country: An Oral History of the Israeli War of Independence* (New York: Watts, 1982), 289.

⁷³ Avi Kober, "Great-Power Involvement and Israeli Battlefield Success in the Arab-Israeli Wars, 1948-1982," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 26.

⁷⁴ Sachar and Oved, *A History of Israel*, 340.

The IDF amassed 15,000 soldiers in the Negev region to conduct Operation Yaov, its most significant concentration of troops to date in the war.⁷⁵

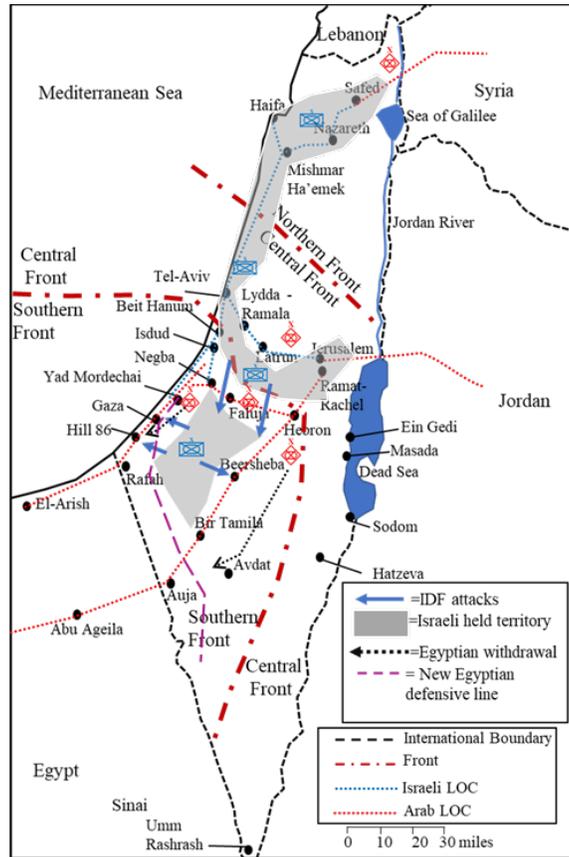


Figure 9. Map of Operation Yoav. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Israel Map*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*.

On October 15, the IDF attacked south from Kibbutz Negba towards the Faluja crossroads and several towns along the road connecting the coast road and Hebron. This cut the Egyptian LOC between Egypt's eastern and western armies. Israel intended to capture the Egyptian LOC and use it to supply its own forces in the Negev. A force of 4,000 Egyptians near the city of Faluja defeated several IDF attacks preventing it from capturing the road in its entirety. The IDF surrounded the Egyptians, isolating them in an area which would become known as the

⁷⁵ J. N Westwood, *The History of the Middle East Wars* (New York: Exeter Books, 1984), 20.

Faluja Pocket. Throughout the remainder of Operation Yoav, the IDF attacked the Faluja pocket with minimal success.⁷⁶

At the same time as its operations by Faluja, the IDF attacked west from the isolated Negev region towards several vital cities along the coast road.⁷⁷ The objective of this second advance was to sever the Egyptian LOC between Rafah and Isdud and force its units to withdraw, which the IDF accomplished with the capture of Beit Hanum.⁷⁸ The IDF captured Beersheba on October 21, cutting the supply lines of the Egyptian forces in Hebron.⁷⁹ The territory and LOCs Israel captured completed the isolation of Egyptian forces near Faluja and forced the Egyptians to withdraw its remaining units to a new defensive line south of the road from Gaza to Bir Asluj.⁸⁰

To follow-up on the success of Operation Yoav, Israel conducted Operation Horev (December 22, 1948- January 8, 1949). In Operation Horev the IDF attacked Egyptian units along the coast road while simultaneously conducting a wide sweeping envelopment from Beersheba, outflanking Egyptian forces at Bir Tamila, attacking across the international border through Auja. The IDF oriented the Sinai offensive towards El-Arish. This envelopment, if successful, would cut the coast road denying the Egyptian Army a key LOC, defeat its forces, and compel the Egyptian government to enter armistice negotiations.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Morris, *1948*, 325-326.

⁷⁷ Pollack, *Arabs at War*, 21.

⁷⁸ Westwood, *The History of the Middle East Wars*, 21.

⁷⁹ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 94.

⁸⁰ Morris, *1948*, 327.

⁸¹ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 98.

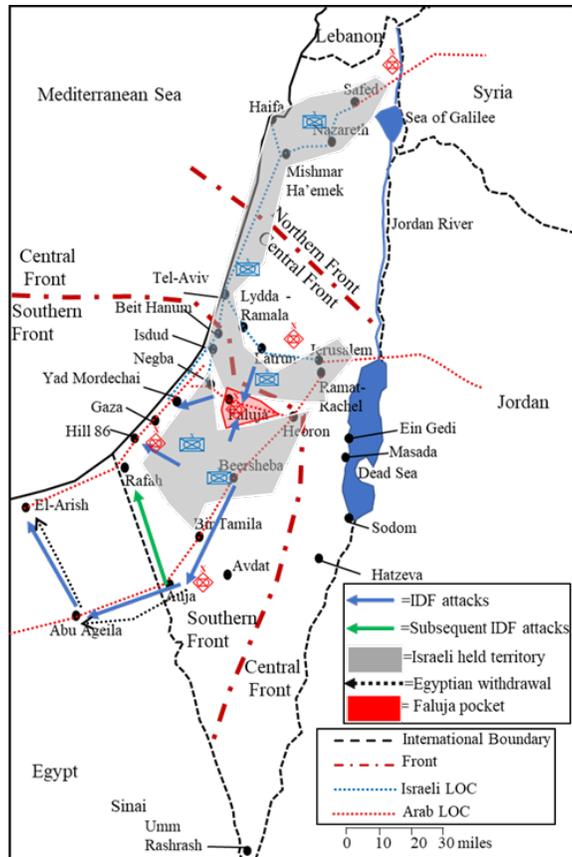


Figure 10. Map of Operation Horev. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, Israel Map, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*.

The IDF began Operation Horev on December 22, with assaults along the coast road at Hill 86 and Rafah. These attacks were a part of the IDF military deception plan to draw away Egypt's attention from the IDF's main effort near Beersheba. The IDF captured the commanding heights of Hill 86 on December 22. The IDF operation at Hill 86 convinced Egypt the main assault of Operation Horev was occurring along the coast road.⁸² On December 24, the IDF attacked south from Beersheba towards Auja with a highly mobile force equipped with armored

⁸² Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 99.

cars, half-tracks, and tanks.⁸³ The capture of Auja on December 26 forced the remaining Egyptian units on its eastern wing to withdraw across the international border into the Sinai.⁸⁴

The IDF crossed the international border into the Sinai on December 28 to pursue the retreating Egyptian units. The IDF attacked Abu Ageila before turning northwest towards its ultimate aim, El Arish and the encirclement of the Egyptian Army.⁸⁵ The act of crossing into Egypt's sovereign territory alarmed the major world powers. In response to Israel's actions, the United States and the United Kingdom issued ultimatums demanding that Israel withdraw its forces from the Sinai, which it did on January 1, 1949.⁸⁶

Fearing the Egyptian Army could escape, Colonel Allon requested permission to attack Rafah to cut Egypt's line of retreat.⁸⁷ David Ben-Gurion approved Allon's request, and the IDF attacked towards Rafah on January 4. The attack did not secure the town of Rafah, but it captured a roadblock to the south along the international border, achieving the objective of denying the Egyptian Army the ability to resupply or retreat.⁸⁸ While Operation Horev did not destroy Egypt's Army, the isolation of the Egyptian troops forced the Egyptian government to begin armistice negotiations.⁸⁹ During Operation Yoav and Horev and the IDF continued its attempts to defeat the isolated Egyptian soldiers inside of the Faluja pocket. The pocket would remain in Egyptian hands until the signing of the cease-fire agreement between Egypt and Israel on February 24, 1949.⁹⁰

⁸³ Morris, *1948*, 361.

⁸⁴ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 99.

⁸⁵ Morris, *1948*, 362.

⁸⁶ Thomas, *How Israel Was Won*, 88.

⁸⁷ Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 68.

⁸⁸ Ben-Gurion, *Israel: A Personal History*, 316.

⁸⁹ Morris, *1948*, 369.

⁹⁰ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli*, 97.

Analysis of Operational Art

The major shift in Israeli operations between this phase and the last is that defeating the enemy became the primary objective of the IDF, instead of the security of Israeli territory. The emphasis of the IDF during the first sub-phase of the conventional war, remained defensive; securing its territory and stopping the invasions. Israel concentrated its efforts on disrupting its adversary's tempo and operational reach to set the conditions necessary to transition to offensive operations. During the second sub-phase, Israel shifted to offensive operations; seeking to expel the Egyptian Army from Israel and end the war. Two factors contribute to Israel's change in strategy. Victories against the Arab armies during the initial invasion provided the IDF with experience and confidence in its abilities. Lastly, the inability of the Arab coalition to fight for common objectives provided Israel with an opportunity to regain control of the operational tempo.

The analysis suggests that during a conventional war, all elements of operational art are present but basing, tempo, and phasing and transitions require added attention. Israel's use of basing changed. It transitioned from the critical factor to a factor in facilitating operations. During the first sub-phase, Israel employed the element of basing similarly to the civil war, as it fought to retain every town along vital LOCs. The lack of mobility early in the war required the IDF to maintain these positions as a mechanism to uphold the security of the state. The Battles for Yad Mordechai, Negba, Isdud, and Lydda, and the IDF's four attempts to recapture Latrun demonstrated Israel's resolve to retain or regain locations despite significant casualties. During the second sub-phase, the IDF no longer viewed basing as the critical element which drives operations. Basing became a subordinate element of operational art, as Israel used secure locations such as Negba and Beersheba as staging locations for its forces during Operation Yoav and Horev. Further evidence of this Israeli shift in thinking is the IDF's willingness to bypass fortified enemy positions occupying Israeli towns, to attack the rear of the enemy and its supply lines demonstrated by the IDF's attack on Auja during Operation Horev.

Israel used phasing and transitions to control the tempo, enabling it to defeat the Arab forces. Examination of the war provides three clear phases for the IDF: defense, consolidation, and offense. Israel's application of phasing and transitions at the operational level enhanced its efficiency by providing a focus for its efforts. During the first phase, defense, the leadership of Israel made it clear that stopping the invasions and preserving its territory was the top priority of the IDF. This defensive phase was a continuation of the efforts from the civil war. The Battles for Yad Mordechai, Negba, Isdud, Latrun, and Lydda demonstrate the doggedness of the IDF in the defense or reacquisition of Israeli territory as each town.

The second phase, consolidation, occurred between the first and second truce. The IDF conducted limited attacks to regain territory from the stalled Arab armies, providing a stable base for future operations. On the southern front, the IDF conducted Operations An-Far and Death to the Invader to secure the Negev region and open a LOC with isolated forces. The IDF conducted similar operations on the northern and central fronts. In all of these operations, the IDF conducted limited attacks to consolidate Israeli territory setting the foundation to transition to the next phase.

The third phase, offensive operations, occurred during sub-phase two of the conventional war and continued into the final stage of the war. The highly synchronized and complex maneuvers utilized by the IDF rendered the Egyptian Army incapable of continued fighting and forced its government to the negotiating table. Each phase was contingent upon the success of the preceding phase. Without proper phasing at the operational level to recognize and exploit transitions, Israel would not have regained control of the operational tempo.

Controlling the operational tempo allows a force to gain the initiative and impose its will upon its opponents. Israel understood that limited mobility challenged its ability to enforce its desired tempo upon the enemy. Instead of looking inward to increase its tempo Israeli operations looked outward and concentrated on efforts to decrease Egypt's control of tempo and operational reach. During the first sub-phase, Israel fought several battles to delay Egypt's advance. Israeli

resistance during the Battle of Yad Mordechai impeded the Egyptian progress towards Tel-Aviv for several days allowing Israel to continue defensive preparations near Isdud.

At the Battles of Negba and Isdud, Israel wrested control of tempo away from the Egyptians halting their advance north. Israel further decreased Egyptian control of tempo and operational reach by attacking Egypt's LOC as it advanced. As the Egyptian Army continued its advance north, its supply lines became increasingly vulnerable to Israeli attack. The concentration on reducing Egypt's control of tempo set the conditions necessary for Israel to transition to offensive operations during the second sub-phase through the conclusion of the war.

Several lessons concerning the application of operational art arise from this case study. During a conventional war, all elements of operational art are present but basing, tempo, and phasing and transitions receive added attention, and the remaining elements are subordinate. Basing remains important during a conventional war, but it migrates from being the critical element to an element which facilitates operations. The capability to establish basing at any location and project power is what becomes important. Through the proper application of phasing and transitions, the operational artist can center efforts to control the tempo of the battle. Understanding the context of the situation, identifying transition points, and building phases, allows the operational artist to develop operations to control the tempo, exploit transitions, and ensure unity of effort. Tempo contains both friendly, and enemy components and the planner must develop operations with actions to decrease the enemy's control of tempo while increasing friendly control.

Chapter Three: Pending Ceasefire

The final phase of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war occurred from January 8 to July 20, 1949. During this phase of the war, Israel and its opponents were negotiating terms of a ceasefire, while still jockeying for positions of advantage. The closing case study examines Israel's use of operational art during the final phase of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war in which Israel emphasized end

state and tempo, and ignored operational reach and culmination, to secure the State of Israel.

Figure 11 depicts the seven months examined in this case study.

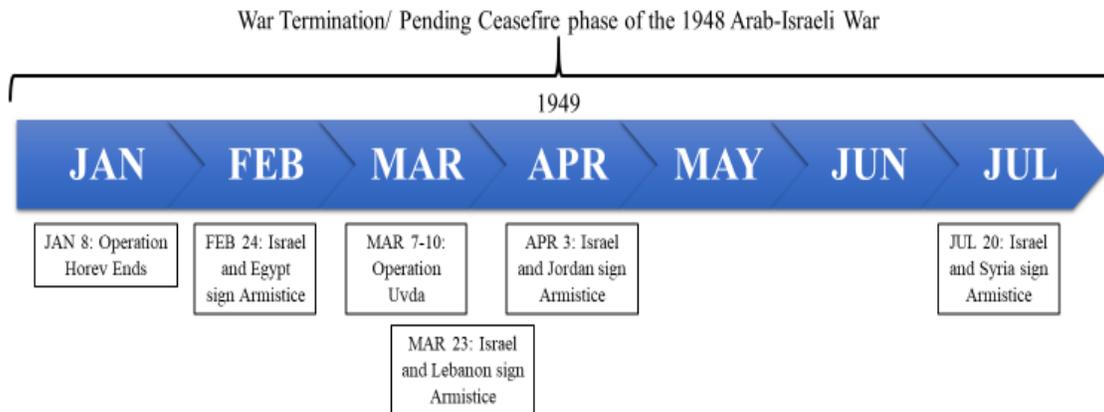


Figure 11. Timeline of the War Termination/Pending Ceasefire Phase. Created by the author using information from Efraim Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 9-12; Rogan and Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*, ix-x.

Significant Events

Operation Uvda (March 7-10), was the final operation conducted by the IDF during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. With Operation Uvda the IDF intended to occupy territory in the Negev region not captured during Operation Horev. To David Ben-Gurion, the Negev region represented an area for resettlement of immigrants and a potential source of mineral resources, such as those present in the Dead Sea. Additionally, Israel sought to seize Umm Rashrash located on the Gulf of Aqaba to gain access to the Red Sea. Access to the Red Sea provided Israel with a shorter link to potential trade markets in Asia or Africa after the war.⁹¹

⁹¹ Morris, *1948*, 380.

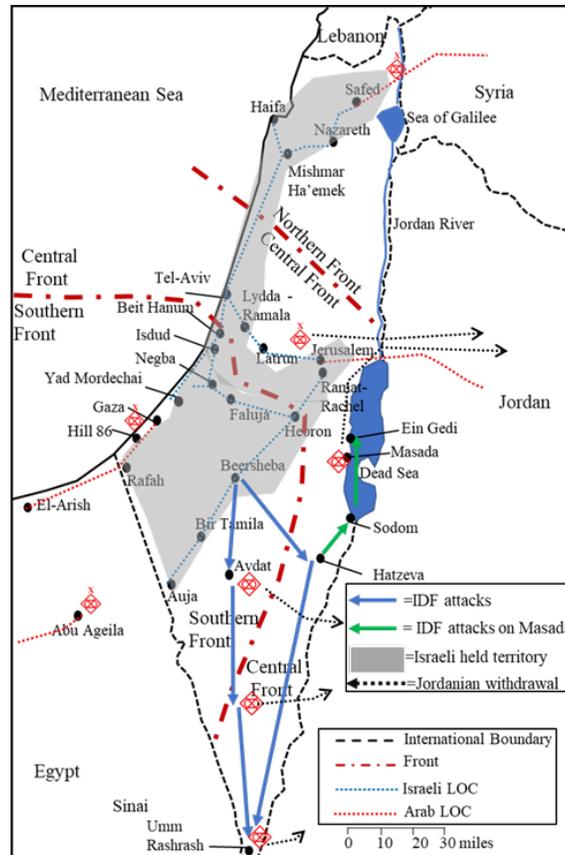


Figure 12. Map of Operation Uvda. Created by the author. Data for base map from United States Central Intelligence Agency, Israel Map, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1988), accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631060/>. Data for events from Morris, 1948; Herzog, *The Arab Israeli Wars*; Karsh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*.

Israel began Operation Uvda on March 7, 1949. The offensive initiated from Beersheba before splitting into two axes of advance heading south towards Umm Rashrash. One column advanced south towards Avdat and the Ramon Crater, the other advanced southeast towards Hatzeva. Upon reaching Hatzeva, the eastern column split its forces; a portion continued south towards Umm Rashrash, and a contingent headed north towards Sodom and the Dead Sea.⁹²

On March 8 the IDF reached Sodom, located on the southern end of the Dead Sea. Strong Arab Legion positions near Masada prevented the IDF from continuing north. In response, the IDF bypassed the Arab Legion positions by moving its forces from Sodom to Ein Gedi

⁹² Morris, *1948*, 383.

amphibiously.⁹³ This operational envelopment forced the Arab Legion to withdraw its troops from the Dead Sea region or face isolation. On March 10 the Arab Legion abandoned its remaining positions within the Negev and withdrew its forces back across its border into Jordan. The IDF continued its race to the Red Sea to capture its primary objective, the town of Umm Rashrash, a few hours after the withdrawal of the Arab Legion.⁹⁴ The capture of Umm Rashrash marked the end of Operation Uvda.

Armistice Agreements

Israel and Egypt signed the first armistice agreement of the war on February 24, 1949. The Egyptian forces still trapped in the Faluja pocket finally ceded its territory to Israel and returned to Egypt.⁹⁵ Israel signed armistice agreements with Lebanon on March 23 and Jordan on April 3. Israel and Syria signed the final armistice agreement of the war on July 20.⁹⁶ Despite ending hostilities, the armistice agreements were not peace agreements. The Arab nations refused to include the recognition of the State of Israel.⁹⁷ Through its actions and the armistice agreements, Israel controlled over three-quarters of mandate Palestine, instead of the half allocated to it through UN Resolution 181.⁹⁸

⁹³ Morris, *1948*, 384.

⁹⁴ Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 104.

⁹⁵ Morris, *1948*, 377.

⁹⁶ O'Ballance, *The Arab-Israeli War*, 204-205.

⁹⁷ Morris, *1948*, 391.

⁹⁸ Ian Black, *Enemies and Neighbors: Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel, 1917-2017* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017), 131.



Figure 13. Armistice Agreements. Nations Digital Library, Armistice Agreements Between Israel and Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt 1949, (New York: United Nations, 1983), accessed March 28, 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/413258?ln=en>.

Analysis of Operational Art

This case study extracts two elements of operational art to examine; end state and tempo.

Israel applied the operational art element of end state as a scaffold for its operations. Israel aimed to end the war, secure its population, eject the remaining Arab armies, and add territory. Israel designed Operation Uvda to accomplish these aims. By driving the Arab Legion from the Negev, Israel eliminated the last major threat to its population on the southern front. Additionally, the

territory seized in the Negev region supported the expansion of the new state through settlement and the promise of minerals and trade routes to fuel the new economy.

Israel used tempo in two ways during the final phase of the war. Israel conducted its operations faster than the pace of negotiations and the speed it moved in relation to Arab forces. Israel recognized that if it seized additional territory, it would have a position of advantage during armistice talks. Moreover, Israel realized it needed to act quickly and decisively to avoid intervention or condemnation by world powers. The second component of tempo is the speed with which Israel maneuvered against the Arab Legion. Throughout Operation Uvda, Israel's emphasis on speed allowed the IDF to outflank the Arab Legion positions. The open arid terrain of the Negev desert provided the perfect conditions for Israel to conduct these bypasses and continue towards its primary objectives. Finding IDF units to its rear, Arab Legion forces withdrew towards Jordan eventually crossing the border on March 10, 1949.

Israel utilized the elements of end state and tempo to achieve its objectives while ignoring operational reach and culmination. Israel ignored the element of operational reach because it did not establish a method for resupplying its forces during its advance south. As its units culminated due to dwindling supplies, it brought in new units to continue the advance. The replacement of whole units was an effort to continue to advance as rapidly as possible. Operation Uvda represented a striking shift in Israeli operational maneuver and its perception of risk. The focus of Israeli operations shifted from adversary to territory. Israel saw its greatest risk as not securing essential territory before the end of hostilities, not the Arab threat. IDF units disregarded enemy formations as they sped towards essential positions to secure them before the conclusion of hostilities. Not achieving military objectives was a higher risk than the threat posed by Arab forces.

The conditions of the final phase of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war had an impact on Israel's use of operational art. The announcement of a ceasefire threatened to end the war before Israel could complete its desired objectives. The arid desert terrain of the Negev desert provided Israel

with the perfect ground to conduct its quick assaults. Lessons extracted from this case study demonstrate that the end state is essential because it provides a gauge to determine success and defines the desired goal the operational artist emphasizes when planning missions. Tempo is not just the speed of a unit; it includes the pace of the battle and the swiftness of decision-making. Therefore, the operational artist must formulate operations to control the tempo, disrupt the enemy's decision cycle, and create conditions to force the enemy into slower reaction times. Higher tempo operations inherently incur a more significant amount of risk to forces; planners must develop methods to mitigate risk to acceptable levels while maintaining a rapid tempo.

Conclusion

This section compares the three case studies presented above to understand if the nature of war changes the elements of operational art employed by commanders and planners. In the civil war, the Yishuv stressed the elements of basing and operational reach to achieve their objectives of securing territory and LOCs while preparing for the Arab invasion. As the war transitioned to a conventional war, Israel emphasized the elements of basing, phasing and transitions, and tempo to defeat the invading Arab armies. During the pending ceasefire phase, Israel utilized the elements of end state and tempo to secure the state of Israel. The three distinct phases of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war offer insight into the changing nature of the conflict and how it impacts the use of operational art. Figure 14 depicts a comparative view of the case study results.

| Phase | Civil War | Conventional War | Pending Cease Fire |
|---|---|---|--|
| Emphasized Element(s) of Operational Art | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basing* • Operational Reach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phasing and Transitions* • Tempo • Basing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End state* • Tempo |
| Subordinate Element(s) of Operational Art | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COG • Culmination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All are present | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Reach • Culmination |
| Nature/ Context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noncontiguous territory • Militias • Minimal mobility • Pending Invasion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State actors • Existential threat • Increased mobility • International Intervention (UN) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pending truce settlements • International opinion • Future security concerns |
| Objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure territory • Secure key LOCs • Prepare for Arab invasion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survive Invasion • Consolidate territory • Expel Invaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure additional territory • Secure resources • Negotiate truce |

*Critical Element

Figure 14. Phase Comparison. Created by the author.

In the civil war, basing was the critical element employed by the Yishuv. The noncontiguous territory and threat of Arab invasion meant that the Yishuv's priority was the security of its territory. To secure its population areas, key terrain, and LOCs, the Yishuv needed to maintain control of the surrounding towns. Underscoring this view was the Yishuv's efforts to defend critical locations such as Mishmar Ha'emek, Haifa, and other towns along crucial LOCs. During the second sub-phase of the conventional war and pending ceasefire phase, Israel's view on basing shifted, becoming a mechanism for staging and supplying its forces. Operations Yoav, Horev, and Uvda demonstrated this change in philosophy. During each operation, secured locations such as Kibbutz Negba and the city Beersheba served as staging locations. Unlike operations during the civil war, the IDF bypassed towns if they were not critical to achieving its objectives. Two alterations to the nature of the conflict drive this change. Israel successfully secured its territory during the civil war providing it with a stable foundation to conduct operations and the continued importation of equipment increased mobility within the IDF.

Israel applied phasing and transitions at the operational level to gain control of and exploit tempo. Examination of the war provides three clear phases for the IDF: defense,

consolidation, and offense. Each transition coincided with a change of the conflicts nature. Throughout the civil war and into the first sub-phase of the conventional war Israel fought defensively, forfeiting control of the tempo in favor of securing its territory. Battles at Mishmar Ha'emek, Haifa, Yad Mordechai, Negba, Isdud, Jerusalem, Ramat-Rachel, and others were fought in reaction to Arab actions and to retain Israeli territory. From June 11 to October 1948 Israel began a consolidation phase aimed at strengthening its position. Operation An-Far, Dekel, Dani, Kedem, and Death to the Invader represent Israel's attempts to expand its territory, secure its LOCs, and expel Arab armies from advanced positions. The last transition occurred in October 1948 and lasted through the end of the war, as Israel shifted to an offensive phase. Operation Yoav, Horev, and Uvda demonstrate Israel's offensive focus, as it sought to defeat the Egyptian Army. Identification of transition points and the use of phases at the operational level enabled Israel to defend against invasion, strengthen its security, and counterattack to defeat its enemies to ensure the survival of the state.

The announcement of the ceasefire dramatically altered how Israel conducted its operations. During the civil war and conventional war phases, Israel faced multiple enemies along its fronts. To counter the threat, Israel constructed coordinated plans ensuring that operations in one area would not significantly weaken other portions of its army. Early operations such as Nahshon, Maccabee, Yiftach, Dekel, Dani, and others concentrated on sequentially securing key locations, while not significantly weakening other fronts. During Operation Yoav and Horev the IDF conducted highly synchronized operational maneuvers to defeat the Egyptian Army. Instead of dampening actions, the announcement of the ceasefire accelerated Israel's actions. The condensed timeline forced the IDF commanders to accept higher levels of risk to forces through rapid maneuver to achieve military objectives. During Operation Uvda Israeli maneuver focused on speed rather than coordination and synchronization as it raced south to secure objectives.

This project centered its research on determining if the nature and objective of war impact the application of operational art. This project concludes that changes in the nature and

objectives of war require a reframing of the elements of operational art highlighted by the planner and that some elements require added thought, and some are subordinate when the nature of conflict is parallel to the phases represented in the case studies. As the nature of the conflict changes, the emphasis of operations changes which causes a change in the application of operational art. The analysis shows that during a civil war and pending ceasefire, operations center on the acquisition or defense of territory. During a conventional war, the focus turns to the enemy and its destruction. Analysis from this project suggests that during a civil war basing and operational reach are critical while culmination and center of gravity (COG) are subordinate. During a conventional war basing, tempo, and phasing and transitions receive added attention, but all elements play a part. In a pending ceasefire tempo and end state are critical, while culmination and operational reach are subordinate. Operational planners must understand the relationship between the nature of the conflict and how it affects operational as they develop operations.

The analysis presented supports current US Army doctrine and its understanding that operational art is flexible and adaptable to the situation. But it goes beyond current doctrine to conclude that some elements of operational art require added thought while some are deemphasized and even ignored. ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, reminds planners, “the principles are broadly applicable considerations whose relevance varies in each case; they are not a checklist... commanders generally consider all principles but may not apply them in the same way in every operation.”⁹⁹ FM 3-0, *Operations*, explains that “the application of specific elements of operational art is situation and echelon dependent.”¹⁰⁰ This project does not advocate for a change to US Army doctrine. It suggests that some elements require amplified consideration when the nature of conflict is equivalent to the phases represented in the case studies of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

⁹⁹ US Army, *ADRP 3-0*, (2017), 2-1.

¹⁰⁰ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, Change 1* (Washington, DC: Government Print Office, 2017), 1-20.

Critical takeaways for future operational planners lie in the relationship between the nature of the conflict and its effects on operational art. The analysis suggests that if the United States intervenes in a civil war, defending or securing added territory becomes the focus for the operational artist. Planners should first look to aid its partner's efforts to secure basing and extend operational reach. Basing provides the foundation from which an Army can secure local populations, exert influence into a region, and conduct further operations. If limited mobility is a concern, the locations along LOCs become essential to control as friendly forces perform resupply operations. Efforts to secure LOCs and protect supply routes, extend the operational reach of combat forces. The elements of basing and operational reach provide the foundation for further actions in a conflict akin to a civil war. US planning efforts should seek to support its partner's endeavors to secure basing and extend operational reach to achieve its interests and objectives.

Analysis indicates that as a war shifts towards a conventional war featuring LSCO, operations become focused on destroying enemy forces. When planning operations, commanders and planners should give additional consideration to the elements of basing, phasing and transitions, and tempo. Basing remains an essential element the operational artist seeks to maintain. As opposed to civil war the location is not what is critical. Instead, the capability to establish basing at any site and project power is vital as it improves the organization's abilities. An understanding of phasing and transitions allows the operational artist to understand the context of the situation, control the tempo, and develop opportunities for potential exploitation. The fight for control of tempo has both friendly and enemy aspects. By analyzing means which assist enemy units in controlling the tempo planners can discover new vulnerabilities to attack.

An examination of case studies suggests that as the war is nearing its termination, the focus of operations shifts back to the defense or acquisition of territory. As such, operational artists should add emphasis on the elements of end state and tempo. Transitioning from a conventional war to stability operations is complicated. Setting the proper conditions eases the

transition. The end state offers the framework for operations to achieve the future environment the commander desires. The capacity to scrutinize both temporal and physical aspects of tempo are fundamental skills to the operational artist. Physical elements of tempo associate to enemy decisions and friendly capabilities while the temporal aspects connect to the context and nature of the conflict, such as Israel's need to complete Operation Uvda before the cessation of hostilities. As the United States seeks to terminate a conflict, the operational art elements of end state and tempo require added attention by the operational artist when planning operations.

Analysis denotes that the announcement of a pending ceasefire may not stabilize a region in conflict. It can drive adversaries to conduct riskier operations to achieve end states before the ceasefire comes into effect. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war the announcement of the ceasefire was the impetus of Israeli actions to secure more territory. Understanding of the correlation between the announcement of a ceasefire and the level of activity adds additional comprehension of potential risks within the conflict. As the United States intervenes in stability operations, it should expect an acceleration of offensives before its intervention.

This project explored Israel's use of operational art through the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. A study of the war provides a unique opportunity to examine which elements of operational art the planner emphasizes. As the nature of the conflict in each phase changed, it required a reframing of operational art to achieve military objectives. Key lessons from this project for future operational planners lie in the relationship between the nature of the conflict and its influences on the focus of operations and employment of operational art. The analysis of this project suggests that as the nature of the war shifts, the focus of operations changes. During a civil war and pending ceasefire, securing or defending territory is the emphasis of operations. During a conventional war, the emphasis shifts to destroying the enemy. Furthermore, the analysis suggests that some elements of operational art need heightened contemplation while some are de-emphasized, or even ignored, by planners during conflicts which present similar characteristics to the different phases of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

The uncertainty of the global environment requires operational artists who understand how its elements can contribute to victory across a range of conflicts. The volatility of known and unknown actors raises the potential for US involvement in a range of military operations. Great power threats are increasingly active on the international stage, and several countries are encountering internal strife. The United States cannot guarantee the type or location of its next conflict. Therefore, it is vital that the United States continue to remain flexible in its preparations and scrutinize historical examples to extrapolate lessons of the nature of a conflict and its impacts on operational art.

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