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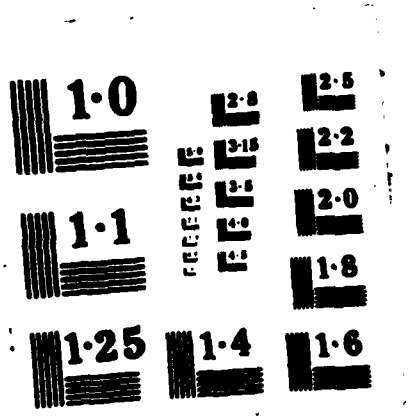
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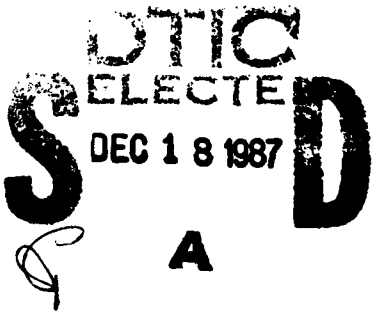
ISRAEL'S 1982 INVASION

M. THOMAS DAVIS



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CONTENTS

FIGURES

MAPS

FOREWORD

The wars fought between the Arab nations and the State of Israel have drawn the attention of military analysts for nearly four decades. Tactical warfare as well as the performance of modern weapons have been of particular interest. Since the State of Israel was created in 1948, the weaponry on both Israeli and Arab sides has grown in quantity and sophistication, and tactical doctrine on both sides has evolved as well. The lessons to be learned from Israel's latest conflict—the 1982 invasion of Lebanon—point more particularly, however, to politics, not military tactics or modern arms.

During his many years in the Middle East, Major M. Thomas Davis, US Army, has developed a keen understanding of the region. In this work, employing precepts drawn from Karl von Clausewitz, Davis contents that the 1982 Israeli incursion miscarried because the Israelis failed to balance political ends and military means.

Davis' thesis carries beyond the regional boundaries of the Middle East. That the identification of unambiguous political aims reducible to clear military objectives is a responsibility of national leaders is a lesson he would apply to all uses of military force. His account of Israel's 1982 invasion into Lebanon therefore informs any study of the proper relationship among political and military ends and means.

Bradley C. Hosmer
Lieutenant General, US Air Force
President, National Defense
University

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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40Km
INTO
LEBANON

I. CLAUSEWITZ AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF WAR AND POLITICS

No war is begun, or at least, no war should be begun, if people acted wisely, without first finding an answer to the question: what is to be attained by and in war.[1]

Karl von Clausewitz

On 26 May 1982, Secretary of State Alexander Haig appeared before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and delivered what had been billed as a major address on American policy in the Middle East. The Secretary observed that the ongoing turmoil in the Middle East was of considerable concern to the United States and that the Reagan administration would soon initiate actions to end the Persian Gulf war between Iraq and Iran that had been raging since September 1980. It would invigorate the Palestinian Autonomy Negotiation designed to consummate the final details of the Camp David Agreement mediated by President Carter; and would end the growing internal strife that had paralyzed Lebanon since the days of its bloody Civil War in the mid-1970s.[2]

The policy bureaucracy of the State Department had been busy in the weeks before the Secretary's speech designing and proposing a diplomatic strategy that would, it was hoped, generate movement and progress in all three areas identified by Haig. This activity was seen as a positive sign that the early proclivity of the administration for viewing the Middle East in a strictly East-West context; of seeking the creation of unrealistic anti-Soviet structures such as

the "strategic consensus" proposed by Haig in early 1981; and of adopting what seemed to many an excessively pro-Israel posture in Middle Eastern affairs would soon change. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.[3]

Less than two weeks after Secretary Haig's speech in Chicago, Israel launched a long anticipated attack across its northern border into Lebanon. This action by the government of Prime Minister Menachem Begin had a most unfortunate impact on the US plans for addressing those problems identified by Secretary Haig. At the end of the summer of 1982, the war in the Persian Gulf continued to roll along in full fury; the Camp David Autonomy Talks between the United States, Israel, and Egypt had been suspended indefinitely; the internal conditions within Lebanon were more complicated and destructive than ever; and Alexander Haig had been forced to resign his position as Secretary of State.

The 1982 war in Lebanon created many changes in the Middle East, but perhaps none were more profound than those experienced by Israel. A nation's decision to fight should come after careful consideration of the purpose for the introduction of military forces and of the risks involved; of the demonstrated or perceived inability to secure the desired objectives through other means; and of the probability of success. Historically, the Israelis have well understood the essential linkage between military might and political purpose. They have often used force to achieve certain immediate political goals.[4] In Lebanon, however, something went wrong.

On 3 June, the Israeli ambassador to Great Britain was wounded and permanently disabled in an assassination attempt by a splinter group formerly associated with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Although the group, now known as the Fatah Revolutionary Council, and its

leader, Abu Nidal, had been expelled from the PLO in 1974, Israel responded to this terrorist action with an air attack on Beirut directed against known PLO positions.[5] The PLO countered with an artillery and rocket attack against northern Israel, known as the Galilee, reportedly killing one Israeli.[6] Until this action, a cease-fire between Israel and the PLO, which had been negotiated by American Ambassador Philip Habib the previous summer, following a confrontation over Palestinian and Syrian actions in Lebanon, had held. As Israeli authors Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter noted in their book *Fire in Beirut*, when Israel attacked "it was after ten months of outward peace and tranquility, in which not a single Israeli in Galilee had been killed or wounded by the PLO."[7] Therefore, considering the situation that existed along the Israeli-Lebanese border in the spring of 1982, it could not be claimed that Israel invaded Lebanon to end a terrorist barrage maiming its citizens and disrupting their lives. Jacobo Timerman, an Israeli journalist and intellectual, has charged that, "For the first time, war was not a response to provocation."[8] Clearly, the Begin government had something else in mind when it voted to cross the border, something that had little to do with either the Galilee or avenging the attempted assassination of Ambassador Argov.

By September 1982, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) had won, at best, a most elusive victory. Although the PLO had been pushed back to a distance which placed the Galilee well beyond hostile artillery range, the PLO itself had not been destroyed. Not only had the IDF failed to capture the expected number of PLO "fighters", but the intensification and aggravation of the chaos in Lebanon made an Israeli withdrawal most difficult, if not impossible.[9]

There are many explanations as to why Israel found itself in such a quagmire after invading Lebanon, and why

the government of Prime Minister Begin and Defense Minister Sharon ultimately was compelled to step aside. But at least part of the answer is to be found in an apparent disregard by the prime minister and defense minister for an adage of war first clearly enunciated by Karl von Clausewitz, the renowned Prussian strategist. Indeed, the evidence clearly indicates that Clausewitz would have found much that was objectionable in the manner in which the Israelis both conceived and executed their operation in Lebanon.

CLAUSEWITZ CONSIDERED

Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) was an outstanding exponent of the relationship of military matters to man's other societal interests and endeavors. Although he lived during the Napoleonic period, and never commanded large formations in battle or directed a campaign, the cogent observations contained in his masterpiece *On War* have shaped the thinking of military leaders and statesmen worldwide. Clausewitzian thought is easily discernible in the modern works of such disparate personalities as military theorist J.F.C. Fuller and political scientist Henry Kissinger.[10] His influence has been, unquestionably, enormous.

In reflecting on the significance of Clausewitz, Fuller expressed the belief that, "his penetrating analysis of the relationship of war and policy has never been excelled, and is even more important today than when first expounded."[11]

Without question, Clausewitz's most famous contribution to the literature of military affairs is the seemingly self-evident observation that "war is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse with an admixture of other means."[12] Many have read this to mean that war is politics, that the one can revert to the other and vice versa. But a

closer reading of Clausewitz clearly indicates that this is not an accurate analysis of his assessment.

Although war may be a continuation of politics, Clausewitz clearly believed that it was an instrument of the political art and not a creature with a life of its own. On this point he was quite specific. He noted: "War is only a part of political intercourse, therefore by no means an independent thing in itself."[13] To emphasize the major importance of this observation, Clausewitz added that, "The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be unreasonable, for policy has created the war; policy is the intelligent factor, war only the instrument, and not the reverse."[14]

With this statement, Clausewitz was attempting to indicate that war, if it were to be successfully and prudently practiced, must have as its basis the attainment of *a political objective*. This objective could conceivably be changed or altered during the course of the conflict, but the achievement of the political goal must be the paramount objective of warfare. Implicit in this argument is the belief that the political goal must be within "the nature of the means at its disposal."[15] For national policy to be reasonable and responsible in the utilization of military power, its architects must establish a clearly defined political goal that military means can achieve. The creation of a master plan requiring the application of military force beyond the capabilities of that force is folly on a grand scale.

According to the Clausewitzian perspective, therefore, politics and war are inexorably interconnected, the one directing and using the other as its selected instrument to achieve some purpose. Clausewitz never identified any rationale for war that existed beyond the political context. In fact, so firmly did he believe that military means were the servant of the political will that he declared: "War can

never be separated from political intercourse, and if ... this occurs anywhere ... we have before us a senseless thing without an object."[16]

But what of using the military instrument? Clausewitz had numerous observations on the nature of what we would today call operational issues. Many have slowly slipped into irrelevancy before the rush of technology and the massive changes that have permeated the practice of warfare. But there are two important arguments, relative today in both the tactical and strategic senses, that have survived unaltered.

First is the argument that the war should be completed as quickly as possible. The uncertainty of combat, a factor that Clausewitz called "friction" but today is most usually described as "the fog of war," would inevitably create conditions in which plans, and perhaps even policies and objectives, would have to be altered or rethought. One way to prevent large alterations in the original concept of the war was to finish it as quickly as possible. For this and other reasons, Clausewitz felt speed was an essential ingredient in warfare.

Second, and in many ways closely related to the first, Clausewitz declared that the forces employed should be judiciously used—that they should be directed against the enemy's most important and most vulnerable point. He observed that, "a center of gravity, a center of power and movement, will form itself upon which everything depends; and against this center of gravity of the enemy the concentrated blow of all the forces must be directed."[17] By extension, it can be assumed that Clausewitz believed efforts which were not directed towards the center of gravity might eventually yield success, but not without a significant wastage of time and resources. Some military historians, by way of example, have argued that the Allied effort during

World War II was guilty of ignoring the centers of gravity of both the German Reich and Imperial Japan, thereby prolonging the war and unnecessarily increasing its destructiveness.[18]

The significance of Clausewitz's impact on modern military thought has been profound, but his influence has been less significant than one might expect on many of those charged with the responsibility of developing and executing modern military and political strategy. The immediacy of acting; the necessity of responding to situations of high fluidity; the strong pressures to produce results; and the equally powerful imperative to protect valuable and increasingly expensive resources, have served as wedges separating quality political from relevant military thinking in recent times. Few, if any, modern states are immune from this dangerous tendency. For modern decisionmakers, both in and out of uniform, the implications of this condition are enormous, for the very nature of contemporary conflict demands that the political-military relationship be given greater consideration than ever before.

THE NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

Since the end of World War II, warfare has clearly changed in kind. It would not be completely accurate to argue that we have entered a novel period where warfare has become limited, for historically wars have usually been limited in some aspect. But following the experience of World War II, the concept of total war was so expanded in both scale and intensity that for a war to achieve general acceptance as "total," it would have to be fought on a global scale and probably include the employment of nuclear weapons. The prospect of engaging in such a war has sobered the leaders of both superpowers, along with most of their colleagues in the world community, into vigorously analyzing ways in which conflicts can be contained. To date, the

United States and the Soviet Union have both adopted "rules of order" which have served to limit conflicts around the world, although the degree to which either power seeks to limit a conflict varies according to their evaluation of the interests involved.[19]

At present, there are two primary dimensions in which conflicts may be limited. The first is in geographical scale. If a conflict erupts, its impact and implications will be contained if the conflict itself does not exceed certain geographical limits. Even if both of the belligerents have totally committed their resources to achieve an unlimited objective, the conflict will remain controlled as long as its boundaries are restricted. Despite their violence, both the Vietnam War between the United States and North Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War between Iran and Iraq were limited in space, thus moderating their impacts on the world at large.

In practice, there are considerable pressures brought to bear internationally to localize modern conflicts. After hostilities erupt, the United Nations Security Council usually calls for an immediate cease-fire and a negotiated settlement. Simultaneously, the superpowers measure and evaluate their interests and normally make an effort to control the size of the conflict, particularly if they can discern a probability that the war might eventually lead to a clash between them. Since both Washington and Moscow have widely recognized interests, the unmitigated expansion of even a small flareup has the potential of drawing one or the other into a cauldron each would prefer to avoid.

The second, and most common, limitation is in objective. This condition is not the result of some ingrained desire for lower levels of destruction, nor some late twentieth century mellowing of human nature, but simply the result of objective calculations of what can be achieved within reasonable costs. A real limit is established if there is clearly an

insufficiency of means for a total commitment. This power deficiency may be the result of many things, but its presence dictates that objectives must be established which are proportional to the force one has the ability and will to employ.

In the modern world, this limitation in the availability of means contains within itself something of a self-regulating device. As Adam Smith first observed over two hundred years ago, the cost of the modern implements of war is increasing at a pace which dictates that conflicts simply must be restricted in scale.[20] Today, the costs of weapons, their supporting infrastructure, their operators, and their replacement components, have become so extreme that only the wealthiest of nations can afford the burdens of a large, standing military force. Since the states that have such forces are reluctant to see them employed under conditions of general conflict, and since such forces are very difficult for the smaller and poorer states to either raise or maintain, these limited means dictate strategies designed for limited objectives.

For these reasons, modern conflict has clearly shifted to the low intensity end of the spectrum of violence.[21] Ironically, perhaps, this condition places increased burdens on national policymakers who must rigorously analyze the objectives for which their scarce and expensive forces will be used. Given that the objective will have to be limited in some degree, the accuracy of their judgment on the correct conditions for employment becomes more significant because the opponent will likely have to be influenced rather than forced to change his policies. He will have to be convinced that although his regime may not be totally annihilated, it is, nonetheless, in his interest to yield because the costs of further resistance outweigh the benefits to be gained. Thus, the calculations on both sides become as much economic and psychological as military.

Returning to Clausewitz, in one essay he observed that,

> The more it will be concerned with the destruction of the enemy, the more closely the political aim and the military object coincide, and the more purely military, and the less political, war seems to be.[22]

As just discussed, the modern world has witnessed a marked increase in warfare where good reason dictates that the destruction of the enemy will *not* be the primary objective. Our time is one in which conflict is ordained to be highly political.

Former American Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger has noted that the present decline in the relative strength of the United States, as well as the post-World War II diffusion of power to numerous smaller, regional actors, has created a situation in which Washington will have to be more "clever" than it has been in the past. According to Schlesinger, "When the United States was believed to possess overwhelming power, political blunders mattered relatively little."[23] Current conditions, however, require that American forces be used in situations where they complement effective "diplomatic and political tactics". This means that the relationship that Clausewitz identified so many years ago is not only still operative, it is in fact stronger than ever. As Field Marshal Michael Carver has noted, modern war is still able to support state policy by other means, but one must always ask: Was it worth the costs?[24]

Although this discussion has tended to focus on the modern political-military condition from a superpower perspective, the principles are the same for smaller powers and are probably applicable to an even greater degree.

Small countries obviously have military establishments on a reduced scale. But despite this, the investment and

opportunity costs paid to raise and establish a military force gives a small state a stake in its force that is at least as significant as that of the major nations. The necessity for selectivity in deciding the correct manner in which to employ this force is essentially the same, except that the costs of failure may be much higher. Thus all states face much the same problem in varying degree: how to employ a military force *in a manner which will achieve something of political* value, achieve it before the stakes involve superpower attention, and preserve the viability of local military power.

This last point, preserving the viability of military power, deserves some explanation. Modern conditions have greatly expanded the utility of military force in the perceptual rather than the actual context. The actual capability of a military force today is often less important than its perceived capability. Coupled with this is the expectation that such force will be skillfully used by its political leadership in a way to achieve results while maintaining a perception of strength. In essence, this is the theory of deterrence applied to small scale conventional forces.

Whether this is a desirable condition or not is a moot point. It is, nonetheless, the condition under which contemporary political and military leaders must operate. It demands that national leaders be more analytical and measured *in the ways they decide to use military power.* Basically, this means they must carefully isolate the political aims sought; determine if military power is the proper means for achieving these aims; and then commit forces appropriate for and precisely proportional to the ends desired. In short, there must be a balance of political ends with military means. The failure to establish this balance is a clear formula for disaster.

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, its announced aim was to clear a zone extending 40 kilometers north of its

border. To achieve this Israel committed a military force clearly equal to the task. It soon became clear, however, that Israel's political aims, though ill-defined, considerably exceeded the 40-kilometer line and the capabilities of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Having broken the link between political aims and military means, Israel was condemned to failure.

ENDNOTES

1. Karl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1953), p. 569.

2. See US Department of State, "Peace and Security in the Middle East," *Current Policy No. 395*, 26 March 1982.

3. See Bernard Gwertzman, "Mideast Strategy: The 1950s Revisited," *The New York Times*, 13 October 1981, p. A14.

4. Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation Peace For Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 15.

5. Very little is known about the actual organization called Abu Nidal. It is widely acknowledged to be a renegade faction that has little respect for PLO Chairman Arafat or representatives of the established Arab states. See Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter, *Fire in Beirut* (New York: Stein and Day Publishing, 1984), p. 32.

6. See James E. Akins, "The Flawed Rationale For Israel's Invasion of Lebanon," *American-Arab Affairs*, No. 2, (Fall 1982), p. 33.

7. Bavly and Salpeter, p. 234.

8. Jacobo Timerman, *The Longest War: Israel in Lebanon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 11.

9. Timerman, pp. 112–116.

10. J. F. C. Fuller, *The Conduct of War, 1789–1961* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1961), p. 60. For the Kissinger summation see Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 141.

11. Fuller, p. 60.

12. Clausewitz, p. 596.

13. Clausewitz, p. 596.

14. Clausewitz, p. 598.

15. Clausewitz, p. 16.

16. Clausewitz, p. 596.

17. Clausewitz, p. 586. For a discussion expanding on the comments of Clausewitz see Fuller, pp. 68–70.

18. For a critique of the Allied effort, and its presumed failure to attack the enemy centers of gravity, see Fuller, pp. 279–303.

19. For a thorough discussion of this significant change in the international setting following World War II, see Robert E. Osgood, "The Reappraisal of Limited War", *American Defense Policy*, 3d ed., Richard G. Head and Ervin J. Rokke, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1973), pp. 156–160.

20. See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 653–669. Smith's discussion on the "Expense of Defence" (sic) is fascinating. With only minor revision, the trends and implications that Smith perceived in defense spending are as true today as they were two hundred years ago.

21. For a discussion of this trend, see William J. Taylor, Jr. and Steven A. Maaranen, *The Future of Conflict in the 1980s* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982). The views of the corporate authors are summarized in pp. 3–8.

22. Clausewitz, p. 17.

23. The comments of Secretary Schlesinger are contained in Taylor and Maaranen, p. 16.

24. Michael Carver, *War Since 1945* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, Inc., 1981), p. 282.

II. THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONDITION: COMING FULL CIRCLE

The Zionist movement had always been convinced that the Arabs would receive it with open arms, and be happy for its bringing the values, the ideas and the know-how of West European and American civilization into the Middle East. Because of this illusion ... Zionism committed the unintentional error of ignoring the importance of the Arab attitude for the realization of Zionist aspirations.[1]

Nahun Goldmann, 1978

Conflict in the Middle East has been endemic for centuries, but during the present century it has become chronic. In addition to the strife of religious and ethnic origin that has historically plagued the area, modern international politics has now grafted a seemingly insoluble Arab-Israeli dispute onto the crazily woven regional backdrop. This new component serves not only as a conflict in its own right, but as a complicating increment to the already existing clashes.[2]

This condition has served to create in the Middle East something of a testbed for modern warfare. Wars in the region since 1945 have covered the entire spectrum of violence—civil war, insurgency, guerrilla war, and open conventional war of both mobile and static natures. The 1982 war in Lebanon is merely the latest in a continuing series of conflicts that have been exceedingly damaging to the region's prospects for economic development. As an example of conflict in the modern world the 1982 Israeli

invasion of Lebanon offers many lessons learned and relearned.

Like all the post-World War II conflicts in the Middle East, this one was a small war. In terms of the criteria previously discussed, it was a limited war both in space and time. It was also limited in objective. The Israelis did not attempt to completely destroy all the opponents they faced in the war for they have never had the resources required to destroy all the Arab regimes hostile to Israel.[3] Nevertheless, the objectives that the Israeli politicians established for their armed forces were not sufficiently limited to make them achievable at acceptable costs to the IDF.

This is why the war in Lebanon in 1982 is fascinating as a case study in the modern use of force. A conventional force was sent against an opponent consisting primarily of irregulars or guerrillas who fought when they chose to on familiar and favorable terrain. On a second front, Israel and Syria matched conventional forces, neither of which had a strong desire to become decisively engaged. They faced each other within the narrow confines of the Bekaa Valley. But even in this clash of conventional forces, the mechanized and tank-heavy units committed by Israel were forced to fight in an unfavorable environment.

The Israelis should have taken care to establish political objectives that were both unambiguous and reducible to military terms. In addition, given the small size of the Israeli forces that can be deployed without resorting to a major reserve call-up that severely disrupts the national economy, and considering the American and Soviet sensitivities in the region, there existed a clear necessity for Jerusalem to fight a quick war, securing carefully established political objectives.

Jerusalem, however, did not apply this logic to the war in Lebanon. The goals initially announced seemed to

conform to this paradigm, but the actual conduct of military operations belied the declared intent. The history of this conflict indicates that Israel's political aims were unclear and inconsistent. For reasons that will be long debated, after early successes the Israelis expanded the operational objectives of the conflict to the point that they quickly exceeded the capability of the IDF.

The costs of this effort at political overreach were excessive in both political and military terms. The government of Prime Minister Menachem Begin was soon subjected to extensive internal pressure leading to the abrupt resignation of the disheartened leader on 15 September 1983. The principal architect of the invasion, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, was also forced from office because of events associated with the siege of Beirut. In early 1985 he went to court, suing an American periodical in an effort to rehabilitate and enhance his stature with the Israeli electorate.[4]

The war was ultimately costly for the United States as well. Not only did the conflict drive Syria closer to the Soviet Union, creating conditions for the re-introduction into the Middle East of regular Soviet forces, but it also dragged the United States into an expensive and futile involvement in Beirut resulting in nearly 300 casualties for the United States Marines, and reopening in American politics questions pertaining to the War Powers Act of 1974 and the appropriate role for US Forces in contemporary conflicts.[5]

In order to understand the context of these events and the conflict in Lebanon, it is necessary to elaborate somewhat on the sources of the conflict that are deeply rooted in the history of the Arab-Israeli dispute. This confrontation has now finally telescoped down to a familiar essence—the contradictory interests of the peoples of the State of Israel and of the land of Palestine.[6]

THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Most people seem to assume the discord between the Arabs and Israelis is fundamentally a struggle between conflicting religious beliefs, between two antagonistic but religiously based ideologies. This is simply untrue. Not too long ago, this conflict was frequently described as one between "the Muslims and the Jews". That it is now predominantly labeled as a dispute between "Arabs and Israelis," words indicating its true nationalistic and secular nature, is indicative of an increased awareness of the real differences today.

Historically, there are instances where Muslims have persecuted and often destroyed Jewish tribes and communities. Following the battle of "The Ditch" in 627, Muhammed, convinced that one of the Jewish tribes of Medina had collaborated with his enemies led by the Quraish clan of Mecca, ordered the men of the Jewish tribe executed and the women and children sold into slavery. The Prophet was angered that the Jewish citizens of Medina had failed to accept his new religion, and began a campaign to divest Islam of certain practices which seemed to have a Jewish basis. For example, originally Muhammed had directed that Muslims face Jerusalem during prayer, but after the clash with the Medinese Jews, this was changed to Mecca.[7]

The ancestral homeland of the Jews, where they had constructed the first and second temples, was in the ancient land of Israel with its capital at Jerusalem, but this polity existed as an established state under King David and King Solomon for only about 80 years, between 1010 and 930 BC. After being brutally conquered by the Romans, the major Jewish communities were scattered in 135 AD. When the Arabs conquered the region during the reign of the Caliph Umar in 637, there was no longer any large,

established, Jewish community.[8] Many of the Jews who had remained in the area following the Arab conquest converted to Islam. Others maintained the faith in small groups located primarily around Jerusalem.

During the reigns of the great Arab empires and dynasties such as the Ummayads and the Abbasids, and through the time of the Ottomans, Jews lived and even served in high places throughout the ancient Middle Eastern world. As religions that preceded Islam, Judaism and Christianity were accepted by Muslims as legitimate faiths and their adherents were largely free of persecution—although at times, Arab tolerance was unevenly exercised. Accordingly, there is little historical evidence of sectarian strife between Arabs and Jews.[9]

In the period following World War I, when the conflict between Zionist Jews and Palestinian Arabs began to fester, mutual tolerance began to erode. This was not a conflict based on an ethnic or religious component; primarily, it was a confrontation between two nationalisms being played out during a period of rising nationalism.

The Zionist movement began to gather momentum after Theodore Herzl called the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897. The Zionist aim was to reestablish the ancient Jewish homeland in the area now known as Palestine. The Zionist program was succinctly captured in the phrase: "a people without a land for a land without people." It was a simple and catchy slogan, but it was also false. Palestine did have people, the descendants of the Arab conquerors who had been on the land since the seventh century.

During the course of World War I, driven by the desire to defeat the Central Powers, the British had been sinking into a morass of conflicting promises. With the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence of 1916, they had

promised the Arab areas of the Ottoman Empire to Arab forces represented by Sharif Hussein of Mecca, patriarch of the House of Hashim. In 1917, however, the British issued the Balfour Declaration stating that London viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish People." At Versailles the effort of the Entente to square these promises with President Woodrow Wilson's avowed principle of self-determination ultimately resulted in Great Britain being granted a mandate for Palestine and Trans-Jordan with the responsibility of satisfying both the Arab and Jewish communities.[10]

In 1921, Britain's Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, divided Palestine and Trans-Jordan, establishing Sharif Hussein's oldest son, Abdullah, as the Amir of the latter.[11] Practically, this meant that only the portions of Palestine west of the Jordan River would be considered for the site of the Jewish homeland. Between 1922 and World War II, the growing antagonism between the Jewish and Arab communities, the result of the Jewish immigration, created constant problems for London. By 1936, with the Arabs in revolt, the British were dealing with a full-fledged insurgency.

In answer to the difficulties in Palestine, London organized a study of the problem under Lord Peel, a former Secretary of State for India, who in 1937 issued the report of the Commission bearing his name. As Peel saw it, the only solution was to partition Palestine between the two communities. The following year, however, a second commission sent to Palestine to study Peel's partition proposal declared that such a plan would be unworkable because of Arab resistance and the limited space suitable for incorporation into the Jewish province.[12] In 1939, the British issued a White Paper announcing their intention to slowly restrict and then end Jewish immigration into the area. This was strongly resisted by the both the Palestinian

Arabs and World Zionist communities. As they entered World War II, in September 1939, the British found themselves hopelessly caught between the aspirations of two determined national groups.

The devastation of Europe and Hitler's campaign of extermination directed against Jews left millions of Jews homeless after the end of the war. Many wanted to leave Europe and resettle in Palestine, but this threatened to create renewed problems for the British with the local Arab population. As thousands of Jews fled Europe for Palestine in old tramp steamers and other vessels which were barely seaworthy, the British dilemma intensified. If they allowed the Jews in, they faced the consequences of a Palestinian Civil War; if they didn't, they faced the wrath of the Zionist organizations and world opinion which was growing increasingly incensed at pictures of European Jews being again herded into camps—only this time by the British on Cyprus.

Unable to devise a solution; heavily burdened by the costs of the war; and uncomfortable at maintaining a large army contingent in Palestine, where its soldiers were a target of both Arab and Jewish extremists; the British referred the issue to the newly formed United Nations on 12 April 1947. Shortly afterwards, the Whitehall announced its intention to leave Palestine by 15 May, 1948, the day their Mandate was scheduled to expire.[13]

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing an eleven-nation Special Committee on Palestine. This became known by the acronym UNSCOP and it immediately began to study various issues related to the problem. Between 26 May and 31 August 1947, UNSCOP investigated all aspects of the dilemma and in late September rendered a divided report containing both majority and minority suggestions. The majority

report recommended partition with an economic union, much as Peel had proposed in 1937. A minority report, authored by three states, suggested the establishment of autonomous Arab and Jewish states in a federal union following a three-year transition period in which further immigration would be allowed within the limits of the absorptive capacity of the country. Neither plan offered many details as to how the UN would deal with the violent opposition expected from both parties during the execution of the proposals.[14]

The Arabs denounced both proposals as unfair and undemocratic noting, among other things, that in the proposed Jewish state Arabs would constitute nearly half of the population, and that the "best part" of Palestine containing the citrus land would go to the Jews, along with 80 percent of the cereal area and 40 percent of Arab industry. In addition, the Jewish state would receive 55 percent of the land area of Palestine in question despite the fact that they owned only 7 percent of the land. As one Arab scholar has argued,

> We were asked to accept half a loaf, but we rejected the baker's analogy. We believed the principle in question was the Solomonic analogy, and we were the ones who opposed dividing the baby.[15]

The Zionists firmly rejected the minority report, but their General Council, meeting in Switzerland, found the partition proposal acceptable, although they had certain reservations about the area allotted to the Jewish state as well as the status of Jerusalem. Nonetheless, recognizing their position as being essentially strengthened by the UNSCOP proposals, the Zionist organizations launched a well planned campaign to have the majority report adopted by the General Assembly.

On 29 November 1947, after considerable maneuvering by both sides, and after some alterations to the original

UNSCOP proposals by a General Assembly Ad Hoc Committee, partition was voted by the General Assembly. The vote was 33 to 13 with 10 states abstaining.

By this time, Britain had firmly announced its intentions to leave Palestine, regardless of the outcome of the UN vote. Economically, financially, and militarily weak after World War II, Britain was anxious to shed its imperial outposts. It had reluctantly decided to give up India; to terminate its role in the eastern Mediterranean; and to move some of its military bases to Kenya. At the time, the British had stationed in Palestine a substantial military contingent in an effort to keep order. Harassed by both sides, often savagely attacked by the extremist Zionist groups, the British force equalled one soldier for every 1.5 able-bodied, male member of the Jewish community in Palestine, the Yishuv. Since the British had decided to leave India, the strategic importance of Palestine was greatly diminished and the Foreign Office in London saw no good reason to pay for forces there. Accordingly, Britain abstained from the UN vote, declaring that she would abide by any solution acceptable on both sides, but that she would not impose with military force any solution opposed by either side. The British had clearly washed their hands of Palestine.

THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS IN BRIEF

Following the United Nations vote on 29 November 1947, a Civil War erupted in Palestine between the Arab and the Jewish communities. The Arabs probably fired the first shot, but the war exacted a heavy cost from both sides. The Civil War, which lasted until the departure of the British on 14 May 1948, was a cruel and vicious struggle between two societies placed on a collision course because neither would accommodate the irreducible

minimum demands of the other. Because of the limited means available, the war started with an initial flurry of random killings, but it soon settled into a recognizable pattern of fighting as both sides added to their stocks of men and equipment. Between 1 December 1947 and 1 February 1948 the United Nations recorded 2,778 casualties including 1,462 Arabs, 1,106 Jews, and 181 British.[16] In the first four months of the conflict, the Israelis suffered five times the losses they were to sustain in the 1967 Arab–Israeli war which was to include greatly expanded firepower and 15 times more soldiers.[17]

By May 1948, the Yishuv had done relatively well in the war and had clearly taken better advantage of the frequent lulls and cease-fires. Although constituting only a third of the population, the Jewish community eventually mobilized the totality of its resources and actually fielded an armed force that was larger, better led, and better trained than that of the Palestinian Arabs.[18]

After the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, the war changed in complexion. Pressured by their aroused masses, in some cases motivated by the possibility of national and territorial gain, the established Arab states bordering Israel had been planning for a possible armed intervention since mid-April. Ruled by governments with different ideological orientations, and plagued by several dynastic rivalries, the Arabs were unable to develop a coordinated strategy. When the five Arab states of Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon attacked on 15 May, it marked the high water mark of Arab unity of effort. As the war dragged on through the remainder of 1948, the Arab states each fought on their own front with little effort to coordinate strategies or even to share intelligence.[19] This Arab disunity allowed the Israelis to take maximum advantage of interior lines in shifting forces from one front to another as the situation required.

After the first two weeks, the war dragged toward stalemate and the United Nations became involved in an effort to mediate. On 29 May, the United Nations appointed Count Folke Bernadotte as its official mediator and he arranged the first of many truces and cease-fires which went into effect on 11 June 1948.

During this cease-fire, the Israelis resupplied their under-equipped armed force and strengthened it with newly arrived immigrants. The Jewish army expanded to somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000 combatants, armed with new equipment including fighter aircraft and bombers. By the time fighting resumed, the Israelis probably outnumbered the Arabs who had to withhold some of their forces for internal security duties at home. This meant that during the later stages of the war, the Arabs were forced by the availability of forces to adopt a largely defensive strategy.[20]

Fighting was renewed on 9 July 1948 and raged for some ten days although it was mostly contained in the center sector around Jerusalem and the Egyptian front in the Negev desert. During the course of the fighting, the Israelis were able to further widen and secure the road that connected Tel Aviv with the Jewish community in Jerusalem. They then broke through Egyptian lines in the south to open a corridor to Jewish enclaves which had been isolated in the Negev. Although there were some gains in the north, the increasing Arab inability to effect a coordinated military effort allowed the Israelis to maximize their young army's growing capabilities.[21]

Although Israeli efforts to seize control of as much as possible of the area allotted to the Jewish state by the General Assembly partition resolution were succeeding, they were becoming increasingly isolated diplomatically. This isolation was aggravated on 17 September 1948 when the

Stern Gang, a Jewish extremist group, assassinated Count Bernadotte. The attack on Bernadotte was in response to his proposal that the partition plan be modified in a manner that would give the Arabs control of the Negev, annex the Arab territories in Palestine to Jordan, turn Jerusalem into an international city, and allow the swelling horde of Arab refugees to return to their homes.[22] The Arabs rejected this proposal because it would have added to the Jordanian territory controlled by King Abdullah. The Sternists found the proposals for the Negev and Jerusalem so objectionable that they decided to murder the UN mediator who they now adjudged to be hopelessly in sympathy with the Arabs. Bernadotte's position as UN Mediator was filled by an American diplomat, Dr. Ralph Bunche.

Deciding that they had to take concrete steps to alter the military conditions which supported Bernadotte's proposal, the Israelis launched a third offensive on 14 October 1948. By this time, the Israelis had all of the military advantages on their side. They had a larger, better led force, one that had a certain degree of central direction, and one that enjoyed the prerogatives of the attacker—initiative and surprise. In a quick, nine-day campaign, they routed the Egyptians in the south; seized control of the entire Negev desert; and cleared all of the central Galilee in the north.[23]

Following one more period of combat in November, the war came to a conclusion with an armistice signed by Israel and Egypt on 24 February 1949. Lebanon quickly adopted Egypt's lead and settled on 23 March, followed by Jordan on 3 April, and Syria on 20 July. Baghdad refused to conclude an armistice with Israel and, not needing to worry over a common border, simply withdrew her forces, returning them to Iraq. Since the Saudis had contributed only a small token force, they also saw no need to sign a separate agreement and followed the Iraqi example. Thus,

by the summer of 1949, the new state of Israel existed behind armistice lines that reflected the realities of the battlefield more than any logic of economics or demography.[24] Little is written these days about the first Arab-Israeli war, but its nature, setting, and termination have, for several reasons, colored the Arab-Israeli conflict ever since.

First, beyond the concrete success of establishing the modern state of Israel, the psychological implications of the victory of the Yishuv complicated the possibility of future Arab-Israeli relations. The decisive nature of the Israeli victory, against odds that were perceived to be far greater than they actually were, instilled in the Israelis and their fledgling government a sense of pride and self-confidence that lessened considerably their willingness to make the kinds of concessions to the Arabs that were necessary for genuine reconciliation and peace. The psychological constraints on Israeli flexibility that resulted from victory have been evident ever since, although, as we shall see, the Lebanon experience in 1982 has begun to force changes. In 1975, while attempting to negotiate the Sinai II agreement, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger observed how this legacy of the 1948 war had impacted on his ability to negotiate with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Kissinger reported that:

> When I ask Rabin to make concessions, he says he can't because Israel is too weak. So I give him arms, and he says he doesn't need to make concessions because Israel is strong.[25]

Second, on the Arab side, the extent of their defeat was a deep blow to their pride and self-esteem. Their sense of humiliation was so complete that they refused to recognize the existence of Israel, even going to the extreme of removing references to it from maps and periodicals

shipped into Arab countries, refusing to even use the name "Israel" in official business until the early 1970s.[26] According to Henry Kissinger, President Sadat decided to go to war in 1973 primarily to force Israel into realizing that it was not invincible, and to demonstrate to the Arabs that they were not militarily and technologically incompetent. In Kissinger's judgment, "Sadat fought a war not to acquire territory but to restore Egypt's self-respect and thereby increase its diplomatic flexibility."[27]

Third, the most significant consequence of the 1948 war was the refugee problem. The refugees were the Palestinian Arabs who left the areas that became the state of Israel. They lost their homes, their possessions and, by their reasoning, their identity. A protracted debate has raged for years over why the Arabs abandoned their homes. Israeli historians have insisted that the Jewish leaders encouraged the Arabs to remain, but the Palestinian Arabs elected to leave their homes and farms because of the encouragement of their own leaders. Arab historians have vigorously denied this. They maintain that there were no instructions for Arabs to abandon their land, and that the Arabs did so because they were forced out by a combination of Israeli military force and psychological warfare. Arabs are quick to single out the widely known Deir Yassin incident of April 1948, in which Jewish extremists from the Irgun destroyed an entire Arab village, killing some 250 of the Arab inhabitants, including women and children, as an example of the coercive tactics used by the Israelis.[28]

The truth will probably never be known, but it lies somewhere between the two poles of opinion. Indeed, one respected scholar with strong Israeli connections argues that as long as the partition proposal was in doubt, the Arabs, expecting to avoid trouble and return after the issue

was decided, left voluntarily in the face of Jewish insistence that they remain. After the war began and the advantage swung to the side of the Israelis, the Arabs were then forced from their homes as the Israelis attempted to make their area more homogeneous, lessen the danger of Arab espionage and sabotage, and secure additional land and buildings for the expected influx of Jewish immigrants.[29]

Regardless of the exact cause, the effect was the same. By the end of the war, there were approximately 700,000 Arab refugees displaced from lands now occupied by the Israelis. About 60 percent of these refugees wound up in Jordan while the remainder were evenly divided between the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip, and areas of southern Lebanon and Syria. These people, primarily representing excess agricultural labor, were confined in camps and forced to live off the meager handouts of various Arab states and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The camps have become the breeding ground of the discontent that has spawned the contemporary Palestinian national movement. To these Palestinians, the establishment of the state of Israel is known merely as "the catastrophe" and they continue to look upon the Jewish state as imperialistic, western, coercive, and dispossessive.[30] This is the major engine driving the emotional dispute that continues to thrive in the region.

The final major result of the 1948 war was the instability it created among the Arab states in the region. Because established governments had been beaten so badly, and unexpectedly, their regimes came under considerable pressure. In Egypt, the monarchy of King Farouk, which had suffered the most humiliating defeat, was toppled. On 22 July 1952, Farouk was overthrown by a group of young Army officers who were very disillusioned by the course of the war. Within two years, Gamal Abdel Nasser had emerged as the primary leader of this movement and Cairo

became the focus of his Pan-Arab exhortations calling for a united Arab effort to purge the shame of 1948.

In Syria the government was overthrown and replaced by a military clique in 1949. By the mid-1950s, the Arab Baath Party, another force with a strong Pan-Arab message, had come to power in Damascus. The message of the Baathists was that only through the establishment of a larger secular Arab state could the memory of the debacle of 1948 be erased.

In Jordan, which had annexed the portions of the West Bank that it controlled following the war, the composition of the population was greatly altered by the results of the war. Because of the number of refugees who fled east across the Jordan river into the Hashemite Kingdom, Jordan's population became instantly nearly two-thirds Palestinian. This presented King Abdullah with serious political problems. In addition, it strained the limited resources that his country could employ to care for its new and unwelcome guests. Abdullah engaged in a series of secret meetings with the Israelis in an effort to address their mutual problem, but many of the Palestinians considered this to be traitorous behavior. An enraged refugee murdered Abdullah in Jerusalem on 20 July 1951, as Abdullah's grandson Hussein watched. For many, this event is the explanation for Hussein's continuing political caution in dealing with the Palestinian issue since his assumption of the Jordanian throne.

It is within this framework that one should view the major Arab-Israeli wars between 1949 and 1982. The Sinai war of 1956 was a war that Israel elected to enter in collusion with the governments of Britain and France. The three states found themselves with a convergence of interest over the nature of the Nasser regime in Egypt. The British, under Prime Minister Anthony Eden, were at odds with

Nasser's nationalistic actions and pronouncements, an antagonism which reached its peak when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, the vital link between Europe and trading partners to the east.

For the French, the major concern was Nasser's meddling in their insurgency in Algeria. Nasser had provided encouragement to the Algerian rebels and had made support for their struggle against Paris a common theme in his foreign policy.

For the Israelis, Nasser's Pan-Arab philosophy and his often stated desire to avenge the embarrassment of 1948 were interpreted as an immediate, serious threat. In addition, his failure to take assertive action to prevent Palestinian guerrilla activities being launched against Israel from the Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip caused continual tension.

In late October 1956, in an effort to eliminate or at least mitigate this Egyptian menace, Israel attacked Egypt. Shortly afterwards, the British and French intervened to protect their national interests. The result was a quick victory for the Israelis, who conquered the Sinai desert in less than a week, but a political disaster for all three attackers. Not only did Nasser emerge from the assault with his power and heroic image increased, but the attackers were disavowed by the United States, whose President compared their actions to those being used simultaneously by the Soviet Union in Hungary.[31] Washington forced Israel to give back the Sinai in exchange for a promise to support its contention of free passage through the Straits of Tiran at the southern tip of the peninsula.

In 1967, a series of events involving Israel, its Arab neighbors, and the Soviet Union created the conditions which led to the 1967 "Six Day War". Again, the Arabs were attempting to demonstrate their military ability and

were probably overcome by the inertia of events once they had started things into motion. The Israelis, although evidently not involved in any of the actions which initially precipitated the crisis, apparently decided to take advantage of the moment to demonstrate once again their military prowess. One United Nations official recalled that, "I don't think Eshkol [the Israeli Prime Minister] wanted a war, but it was quite clear the military establishment, including the intelligence services, badly wanted a showdown with the Arabs."[32] During this period, Israel's two top military leaders, Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin, and Air Force General Ezer Weizman, the first of a new generation of native-born leaders who were to play important roles in Israeli politics in the future, decided that it was imperative that they demonstrate that "Israel could not be intimidated."[33] Following several bellicose statements by Nasser, and his threatening military reoccupation of the Sinai, the Israelis attacked on the morning of 5 June 1967, destroying the bulk of the Egyptian Air Force on the ground. By 11 June the war had ended in a complete Israeli victory.

This war left Israel with a dual legacy. First, it reinforced the Arab problem of having to account, once again, for complete destruction and defeat. The existing Arab psychological problem was complicated and expanded, leaving them once more with the inability to either settle or admit defeat, while the Israelis were left with victory but inadequate resources and power to impose a preferred solution.

Second, the Israelis captured a considerable amount of territory. To the west, the Sinai desert was once again in their hands and there was now no pressure from the United States to return it. Washington, in fact, having no particular fondness for Nasser or his other Arab allies, and caught in the deepening gloom of Vietnam, was happy to

share in the reflected glory of the Israeli military achievement. Israel, therefore, gained a significant buffer area which terminated on the west with one of the world's best tank ditches, the Suez Canal. To the north, the successful battle with Syria had left Jerusalem in possession of the strategic Golan Heights controlling the entire Galilee area. This meant that the farming areas below the heights would be free from indiscriminate artillery and rocket attacks from Syrian gunners able to see all of northern Israel from their lofty perch. In the center, the Israelis had captured the entire West Bank and the whole of the city of Jerusalem. This eliminated their vulnerable center (which was at places only nine miles wide along the 1948 armistice lines), and shortened their frontier while anchoring it along the more defensible and definable Jordan River.

Unfortunately, this turn of events, promising such great military advantage, also contained the kernel of a dangerous dilemma. These new territories, particularly the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, contained nearly one million Arabs who would now have to be controlled, governed, and administered. As Professor Nadav Safran of Harvard University has noted, "The Israelis had been completely unprepared to deal politically with the situation they faced as a result of their military victory and were deeply divided in the views they improvised after the event."[34]

Keeping the conquered lands, a solution advocated by many because of religious and nationalistic beliefs, would leave Israel in the position of accepting into its body politic an Arab plurality half the size of the Jewish population of Israel. This, given the much higher birth rate of the Arabs, meant that in the future the Jewish character of the Zionist State would be challenged if not altered. Keeping the Arabs out of political life would mean, essentially, creating an army of occupation for an indeterminate period

and the abandonment, in part, of cherished democratic principles. The Israelis have never solved this rudimentary contradiction whose implications haunt them to this day.

Jerusalem decided to live with the status quo, creating a diplomatic logjam that led to the 1973 war. Nasser's successor, Anwar El-Sadat, could not surrender his land in the Sinai, he could not overtly abandon the Pan-Arab principles of his revered predecessor, and he could not elicit from the government of Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir any pragmatic concessions. Seeing no way out, Sadat decided on war in an effort to end the stalemate. He colluded with Syria and Saudi Arabia to launch a limited objective attack against Israel. Sadat intended to demonstrate that the Arab military option would have to be seriously considered by Jerusalem. Syria eagerly provided a second front, while Saudi Arabia provided the necessary financing.[15]

The 1973 Arab-Israeli war accomplished much of what Sadat had hoped for. It ended in a negotiated settlement allowing both Egypt and Syria to argue that they had made concrete advances from their resort to arms. It also lifted from them—although more so in the case of Egypt than Syria—the onus of military impotence. Indeed, the Egyptian achievement in crossing the Suez Canal during the early days of the war is one of the major military accomplishments of this half-century. The 1973 war created the conditions which allowed Sadat to go to Jerusalem in 1977 and start the process which found its final expression in the Camp David Agreement of September 1978.

It can be seen from this brief perusal of the major Arab-Israeli wars since 1948 that one starts and ends with the Palestinian issue. The wars between Israel and the Arab states actually had little to do with the Palestinians, although, obviously, the Palestinians were an ingredient

that added to the atmosphere of conflict. The Arab states bordering Israel, commonly known as the first tier states, have slowly dropped out of the conflict and, with the 1982 war in Lebanon the antagonists were once more, just as they had been in 1948, the Israelis and the Palestinians. The latter were now represented by their own nationalist organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

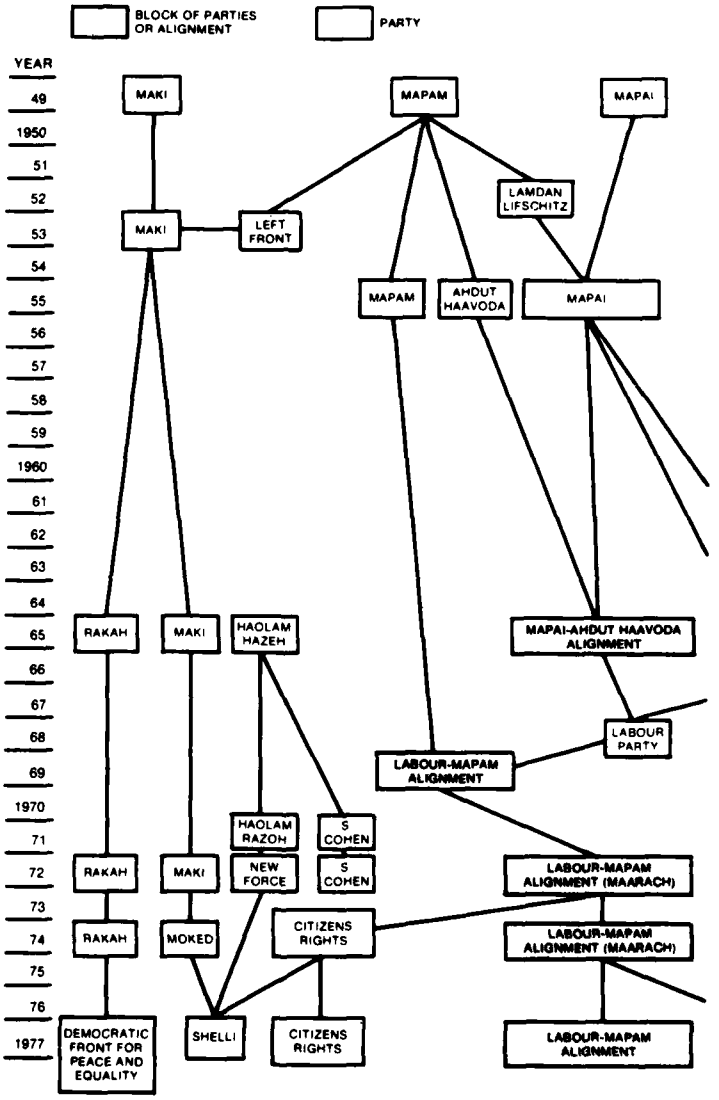
THE COMBATANTS

Although there is little possibility that one would ever find an Israeli and a Palestinian member of the PLO who would openly agree, there are considerable similarities between the structures, processes, and strategies of the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization. This is primarily due to two factors: first, they both seek the destruction of the other, and second, they both are coalition-based political organisms, giving them a similarity of operation.

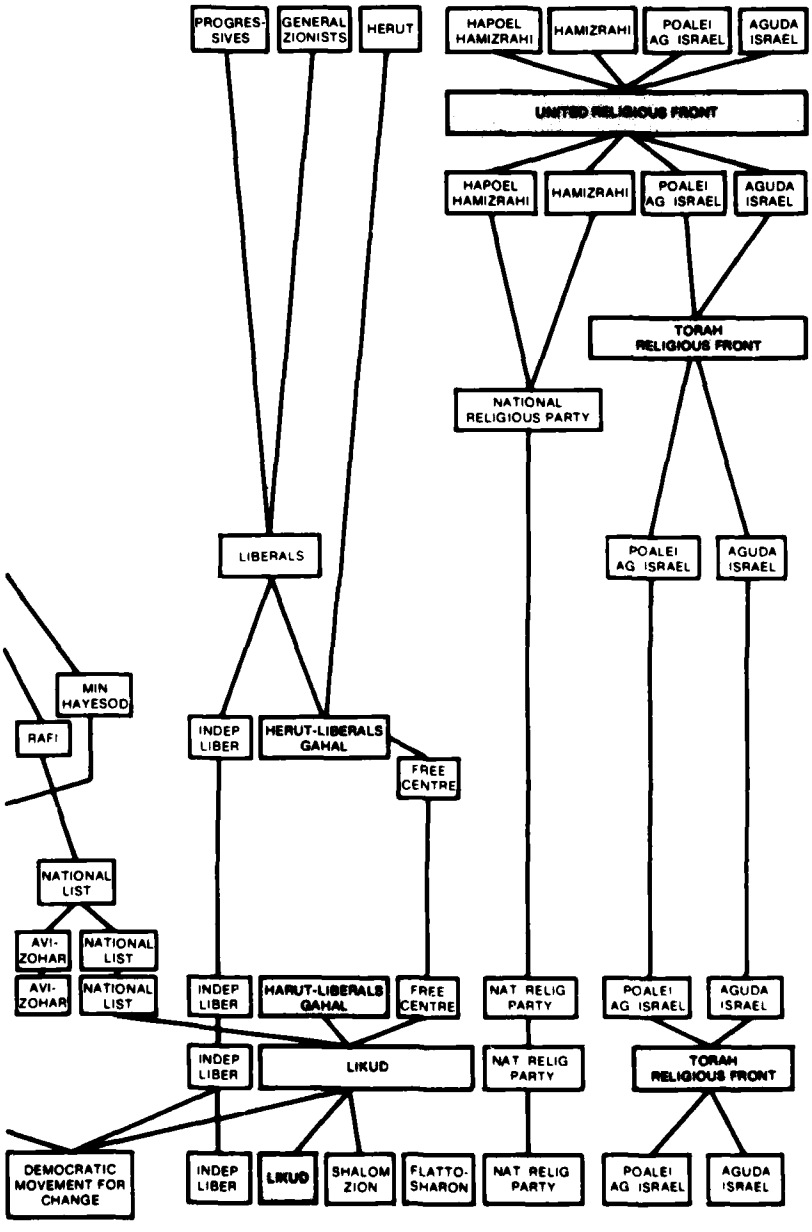
Israel is a democracy with a heritage of political pluralism inherited from its pre-state experience. Since the World Zionist Movement was voluntary, consisting of many peoples from many countries, often expressing differing opinions, the dynamics of early Jewish politics were purposely designed to encourage participation and to protect minority positions. This desire has greatly influenced Israeli politics as they have evolved since 1949.

Although the original intent of the founders of modern Israel was to draft a constitution, an inability to agree on certain key points, such as the exact nature of the state and its basis of law, resulted in this goal being set aside in favor of a Transition Law. This basic law was to establish the nature of the governmental process until a constitution could be drafted; but none ever has been. Thus, Israel's government is founded on the provisions of four basic laws

FIGURE 1: Israeli Political Parties and Coalitions, 1949-1977



Source: Adapted from *Facts About Israel, 1975.*


PROGRES-SIVES
GENERAL ZIONISTS
HERUT
HAPOEL HAMIZRAHI
HAMIZRAHI
POALEI AG ISRAEL
AGUDA ISRAEL
UNITED RELIGIOUS FRONT
HAPOEL HAMIZRAHI
HAMIZRAHI
POALEI AG ISRAEL
AGUDA ISRAEL
TORAH RELIGIOUS FRONT
NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY
LIBERALS
POALEI AG ISRAEL
AGUDA ISRAEL
MIN HAYESOD
RAFI
INDEP LIBER
HERUT-LIBERALS GAHAL
FREE CENTRE
NATIONAL LIST
AVI-ZOHAR
NATIONAL LIST
AVI-ZOHAR
NATIONAL LIST
INDEP LIBER
HARUT-LIBERALS GAHAL
FREE CENTRE
NAT RELIG PARTY
POALEI AG ISRAEL
AGUDA ISRAEL
INDEP LIBER
LIKUD
NAT RELIG PARTY
TORAH RELIGIOUS FRONT
DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE
INDEP LIBER
LIKUD
SHALOM ZION
FLATTO-SHARON
NAT RELIG PARTY
POALEI AG ISRAEL
AGUDA ISRAEL

and the traditions established by the early Zionist movement, as well as on the actions of the first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion.

The supreme power in Israel is the country's Parliament, known as the Knesset, a 120-member body elected for a four-year term unless it votes to dissolve itself earlier. Election to the Knesset is indirect; the Israeli voter casts his ballot for a party, not an individual. There are no regional constituencies which are represented since all party members run nation-wide. After the vote is counted, the party, which has submitted a prioritized list of its candidates, will receive the number of seats in the Knesset which is proportional to its percentage of the total national vote. After reviewing the vote, the President of Israel invites the leader of the party which has the best chance of creating a government to form a Cabinet and submit the names to the Knesset as a whole for approval. Once accepted by the Knesset, this Cabinet becomes the executive branch of the government. The Cabinet has no fixed size and its members, except for the prime minister, do not have to be members of the Knesset although most, especially those that hold the key cabinet posts, usually are.

Clearly, this system protects minority rights and opinions, but it also encourages a proliferation of political parties that, in the United States, would remain as interest groups attempting to influence, rather than join, the government (see Figure 1). Consequently, Israel has never had a political party or alliance win a clear majority of the seats in the Knesset. Since Israel's founding, it has always been led by coalition governments. Small parties, which have strong ideological or religious bases, are therefore coopted into the Cabinet in order for the larger parties to establish a working majority.[36]

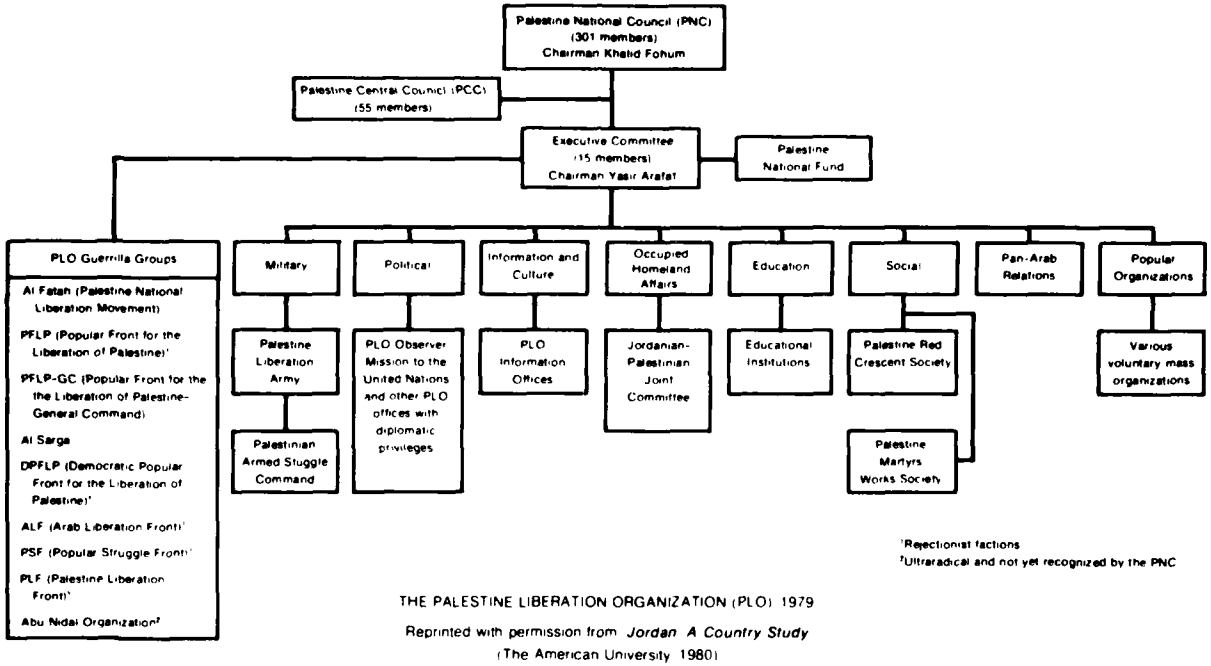
There are two practical effects of Israel's coalition-based political system. First, the ability of the government

to make sweeping or significant changes is significantly limited. Since members of any ruling coalition establish preconditions for joining a cabinet, they are able to prevent the introduction of laws or policies that they find to be too objectionable.[37] Because of this, many of the controversial issues regarding security as well as many of the more daring and risky proposals relating to Arab-Israeli peace issues have been largely removed from the political agenda. In this way, minority opinion is not only protected by the Israeli political system, it is frequently exaggerated.

Second, because Cabinet positions are given out to individuals who represent narrow political interests, there is often a narrow base in the leadership of those who understand and deal in the broader implications of policy. This creates the conditions in which one minister can often enact policies whose controversial implications only become obvious well down the road. This is particularly true, as the 1982 experience demonstrated, if the minister is an accepted expert in a narrow area and is given support by the prime minister and other powerful voices within the Cabinet. The prime minister is the head of the government, but in many instances throughout Israeli history the nature of coalition government and the Cabinet system have made this control over certain ministers and their ministries somewhat tenuous.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is not representative of a liberal democracy, but there are, nonetheless, certain similarities with its organization and that of the Israeli government. As the organizational chart (see Figure 2) shows, the PLO is a part of a semigovernmental system headed by the Palestine National Council (PNC). This council, which meets about once a year, is for all practical purposes the Palestinian Congress in exile. It approves programs, establishes budgets for its various departments and organizations, and coordinates the activities (to the extent possible) of its various components. It also elects an Executive Committee, an organization similar to

FIGURE 2: Organization of the PLO and PNC



THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) 1979

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(The American University 1980)

a cabinet, which carries out the agreed upon programs and is responsible to the PNC. The current Chairman of the Executive Committee is Yasir Arafat, who is also the leader of Fatah, the largest of the PLO guerrilla groups.[38]

The current nature of the PLO reflects its rather turbulent development since its founding in 1964. The PLO was initially established under the auspices of the Arab League and with the blessing of Egyptian President Nasser, in an effort to not only give the Palestinians a political organization, but also to get them under control. Before 1964, the Palestinians had worked primarily with the radical and revolutionary segments of the Arab political spectrum in an effort to achieve the Arab unity that they considered essential for the liberation of Palestine. After the 1956 war, Nasser became the symbol of this effort towards Pan-Arabism, the integration of the Arabs into a larger political unit.

Nasser and other Arab leaders were concerned, however, that Palestinian guerrilla attacks against Israel would involve them in a confrontation with Jerusalem before they were ready. The PLO was, in their minds, designed to be a device to coordinate the Palestinian effort with that of the established Arab states. The need for such an organization had been accentuated after the 1961 breakup of the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria. The Palestinians had reacted very adversely to this development in Arab politics because the failure of Nasser, the symbol of Arab unity, and the Syrian Baath Party, the vanguard of Arab Unity, to successfully integrate showed that the Pan-Arab idea was a long way from fruition. The following year, the success of the Algerian FLN in winning their independence from France through a protracted guerrilla war led many Palestinian leaders to theorize that

they could model their own effort on this regional example, although others argued that there were significant differences in the two cases.[39]

The PLO, initially led by Ahmed Shuqairy, placed considerable faith in the established Arab governments until the outbreak of the 1967 war. After the dust settled from this Arab disaster, control of both the PLO and the PNC were seized by the guerrilla movements and their younger, more energetic leaders—among them Yasir Arafat. Convinced that the narrow interests of the Arab states would always supersede any Pan-Arab or Palestinian interests, the PLO became more independent in its actions. It also absorbed within its ranks numerous other groups having various political and military strategies for dealing with Israel in the near term, and for establishing the Palestinian entity which would follow the ultimate victory. The PLO membership reflected traditional Palestinian vested interests but now also included others, such as young Marxists, who wanted to establish a secular state. In short, Arafat leads a coalition of groups with strongly differing ideas, each having sufficient strength to insist that their individual positions be honored and that certain other options be tabled.

Following the 1967 war, the PLO moved its main area of operations to Jordan. From there it launched numerous terrorist attacks across the Jordan River into Israel. This war against Israel reached a critical phase in late 1970 when King Hussein decided that he could no longer tolerate the effects of having the PLO state-within-a-state making him vulnerable to Israeli reprisals. Following a bloody war in which the King turned the Jordanian army against the PLO, Arafat and his followers were forced from Jordan into Lebanon where they had previously entered into an agreement with the Lebanese government giving them a certain freedom of action in limited areas of the country.[40]

From 1970 until 1982, Lebanon became the fulcrum of PLO activities.

The PLO is, for all practical purposes, something like a government. In fact, the late President Sadat frequently advised the PLO to declare itself to be a government-in-exile. It is also, as is the Israeli government, coalition-based, clearly subject to the limitations imposed upon it by the firm demands of even some of its less significant members. Both parties, therefore, have political processes which make compromise difficult where it concerns issues that certain key components find non-negotiable.

Sheltering under the PLO "umbrella" are numerous groups that operate with a great degree of autonomy. In addition to Arafat's group, Fatah, which is generally considered the most moderate, following its announcement after the 1973 war that it was ending terror attacks against targets outside Israel proper, are several more strident groups that are only loosely controlled. The most ideologically strident is the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist group led by a former doctor, George Habash. This group has been responsible for many of the airline hijackings and bombings attributable to the PLO. It carried out the highly publicized attacks of late 1970 that led to King Hussein's expulsion of the organization from Jordan.

The PFLP General Command (PFLP-GC), a splinter group of Habash's led by Ahmad Jabril, a former Syrian Army officer, has been active in several PLO fratricidal confrontations. The Saiqa faction of the PLO is controlled directly by the Syrians, while the Arab Liberation Front (ALF) is linked to Iraq. Both are rejectionist on issues pertaining to a possible settlement with Israel. The Abu Nidal group, which evidently left the PLO in 1974 following the decision of the PNC to use political as well as military

means in the struggle with Israel, is an ultra-radical faction which has attacked numerous targets throughout the world, including the Syrian embassies in Italy and Pakistan. Generally considered to be beyond the pale of the PLO leadership, it was apparently Abu Nidal that wounded Israeli Ambassador Argov in London, setting off the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.[41]

As this discussion makes apparent, both the Israeli government and the PLO are subject to constraints imposed by their most doctrinaire and extreme elements. This is not to say that both sides use the same tactics, or have the same strategic concerns. Nonetheless, the ability of either to propose acceptable responses to the other is severely limited by internal political constraints.

STRATEGIC CONCERNS

The Israelis and Palestinians have strategic objectives that explain their actions on the international scene. Clearly they both share the common interest of all states and organizations—survival. This translates largely into military considerations for the state of Israel; but for the PLO, with limited military means, the major components of its current strategy are more political.

Israel, even after 37 years of statehood, is still seeking a secure place ir the modern world. Its position as a regional outcast has greatly complicated its ability to establish a self-sustaining national economy. Therefore, Israel has traditionally looked abroad for support in terms of money, supplied from both the Jewish Diaspora and foreign governments, and markets. A major goal of the Israelis is, of necessity, the avoidance of international isolation, a condition which has, from time to time, forced them to find unlikely friends in unlikely places.[42]

The Israelis must also maintain a sensitivity to the requirements of internal control. They are surrounded by hostile opponents who over the years have shown an ability to infiltrate the country, and they have a significant Arab minority population within their borders which has questionable loyalty to the national government. The Israelis cannot afford to be indifferent to the nature of their internal conflicts, which always have the possibility of expanding to dangerous dimensions.

The Israelis, from a military as well as humanitarian perspective, have a great sensitivity to the safety of their citizens. The Jewish population of the country is only a little over three million, which means that Israel bears a heavy burden in any situation which threatens the lives of its citizens. They cannot accept large numbers of casualties under any circumstances without the loss being quickly reflected in both the national well-being and national politics. This is why, in the past, the Israelis have always been willing to exchange thousands of captured Arab soldiers for just a handful of their compatriots.

The Israelis have constantly been concerned about their strategic depth. Because the armistice lines along which the country was formed in 1948 were so abnormal, there were places in which the Israeli state was at severe military disadvantage. At one place in the center, the country was barely nine miles wide. Although the modern era of long-range missiles and aircraft has clearly made this less significant, the fact remains that for Israel defensive depth is virtually nonexistent. Practically, this means that numerous places throughout the country are within range of potentially hostile fire.

Because of their country's small population and lack of military depth, the Israelis have adopted military strategies that emphasize the offensive and short, intense

conflicts. Since the country has no depth around which to organize an area defense, the IDF has long recognized that during any conflict it had to quickly go on the offensive and carry the war away from Israel's borders. As a corollary, the Israelis emphasize preemptive war in which a hard early blow stuns the opponent, facilitating the early assumption of offensive action.

The quick offensive gives the Israelis the initiative and allows them to push the conflict to the earliest possible conclusion. They simply lack the resources to fight long, costly wars, especially ones in which casualties are high. This has reinforced the Israeli desire to preempt whenever possible, for such action offers the best possibility that the duration of the war will be minimized. The 1967 experience seems to vindicate this perspective.

From the Israeli position, the conditions Jerusalem sought to avoid were those where it faced international isolation, especially from its major supporter in the West, the United States; where it was concerned about a disruption in its internal security situation; and where it feared losing the initiative and with it strategic depth. Some of these conditions existed in the summer of 1982, but by adopting the solution it did, Jerusalem created difficulties that it might normally have avoided.

For the Palestinians, the goals and strategic interests are much different. Their major concern is simply to keep the ball in play—to keep the issue of Palestine open, to keep the world community aware of it, and to work to the disadvantage of Israel whenever possible. Their ultimate goal, the achievement of a Palestinian state and the destruction of Israel, is increasingly recognized by those Palestinian leaders with sufficient rationality to apply objective analysis as simply impossible. The objective has become, therefore, to create the conditions for cutting as good a deal as possible.

Although the PLO has continued to use terror (despite Arafat's announcement in 1974) and although it is clearly a major player in the international terror network, the PLO did attempt to downplay its use of this tactic in the late 1970s. The new strategy adopted was to whittle away at the Israelis in the international political arena.

In 1974, Yasir Arafat became the only representative without a country to address the General Assembly, which shortly thereafter, on 23 November 1974, granted the PLO observer status.[43] Apparently liking this format, the PLO and its Arab supporters have since influenced the General Assembly to pass numerous resolutions condemning the Israelis and calling for a settlement of the Palestinian issue. These efforts have included the controversial 1975 vote in which the United Nations General Assembly labeled Zionism "a form of racism."

The United States has long attempted to minimize the impact and influence of the PLO. During the days before the 1967 war, Presidential National Security Adviser Walt Rostow noted that the United States and Israel had attempted to block recognition of the PLO, hoping that "it would die from lack of support."[44] However, during the hostage crisis with Iran in 1979, Washington, at one time, used the good offices of the PLO in one of its efforts to secure the release of the American captives.[45] Talcott Seelye, former American Ambassador to Syria, reported that during a trip to Beirut in 1976 the PLO provided for his security and that of his family as well as passing information that enhanced the security of the US embassy.[46] Thus by 1982, not only had the PLO achieved a considerable degree of international recognition under the leadership of Arafat, it had also succeeded in being recognized diplomatically by more countries than Israel.[47]

The strategy of the PLO was in transition in the early 1980s. Although no senior PLO official had publicly acknowledged that the organization was prepared to recognize Israel's right to exist (a long stated American precondition for dealing with the organization), there were clearly circles within the PLO leadership that were thinking along those lines. But, as the murder, in the spring of 1983, of PLO moderate Issam Sartawi indicated, these could often be unhealthy thoughts to entertain.

THE CONFLICT'S KERNEL

To recapitulate briefly, the major conflict in the Arab-Israeli dimension of Middle Eastern politics is that between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The other factors in this issue, the support and involvement of the other Arab states, the interests of the two superpowers, and the concerns of the world at large, are all peripheral to this central kernel.

The two sides have each established a political process that creates a sort of structural stalemate. The key issues are very difficult for either party to address because the nature of each political regime gives a veto power to those minority groups having extreme views. Although there is some evidence that this is changing, it has been a condition that has caused various efforts by different groups and individuals towards a settlement to abort.

The Arab-Israeli wars seem to have come full circle. The first half of the first war was a clash between the two communities of Mandatory Palestine—essentially a civil war. In 1982, the next generation continued the clash that had started with the 1947 UN partition vote.

ENDNOTES

1. Nahun Goldmann, "Zionist Ideology and the Reality of Israel," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57, no. 1, (Fall 1978), p. 74.

2. See M. Thomas Davis, "Conflict in the Middle East," in William J. Taylor and Steven A. Maaranen, *The Future of Conflict in the 1980s* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982), pp. 237–259.

3. Nadav Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge, MA: The Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 224.

4. See James Kelly, "A General Loses His Case," *Time*, 4 February 1985, pp. 64–66.

5. See "Debating the Military Option," *Time*, 10 December 1984, p. 34.

6. The contention that the Palestinian issue is central to a Middle Eastern peace can be drawn either directly or by implication from numerous sources. See for example, George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982), pp. 466–467; Walid Khalidi, "Thinking the Unthinkable," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 56, no. 4, p. 698; American Friends Service Committee, *A Compassionate Peace* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), pp. 39–40; and Talcott W. Seelye, "Can the PLO Be Brought to the Negotiating Table?" *Arab-American Affairs*, No. 1, (Summer 1982), p. 76.

7. See Philip I. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 7th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), pp. 117–118.

8. Safran, pp. 10–11.

9. Abba Eban, *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Summitt Books, 1948), pp. 125–132.

10. For an analysis of the events after World War I and the American role in them, see M. Thomas Davis, "The King-Crane Commission and the American Abandonment of Self-Determination," *Arab-American Affairs*, No. 9, Summer 1984, pp. 55–66.

11. Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, 3d ed. (New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston, 1978), pp. 106–108.

12. Peretz, pp. 278–280.

13. Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1976), pp. 43–47.

14. Khouri, p. 56.

15. Interview with Professor Walid Khalidi of Harvard University, 5 March 1980.

16. Khouri, p. 59.

17. Safran, p. 47.

18. Khouri, pp. 69–70, and Safran, pp. 45–46.

19. Khouri, p. 70.

20. Khouri, pp. 77–79, and Safran, pp. 56–57.

21. Safran, pp. 58-59.

22. Khouri, p. 83.

23. Safran, p. 59.

24. Khouri, pp. 95–98.

25. Khouri, p. 357.

26. Khouri, pp. 100–101.

27. See Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1982), pp. 459–460. Sadat was very sensitive to the perception of Arab military inability. See also Anwar El-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), pp. 181–186.

28. See Khouri, pp. 123–124; Khalidi interview 5 March 1980.

29. Safran, p. 62.

30. Interview with Professor Walid Khalidi, 13 February 1980.

31. Although numerous studies with both a political and military focus exist on the 1956 Suez Crisis, a very interesting recent work which draws heavily on newly declassified American and United Nations sources is Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez* (New York: The Linden Press, 1981).

32. Neff's second book on the Arab-Israeli wars, covering the 1967 conflict, retains his basic theme that the Israelis have done much to excite Arab passions against them through their policy of disproportional response to guerrilla raids, and inflexible reaction to diplomatic overtures. See Donald Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 58 (Hereafter cited as Neff, *Jerusalem*).

33. Neff, *Jerusalem* p. 194.

34. Safran, p. 429.

35. Sadat, pp. 184–186, and Khouri, pp. 361–370.

36. This description of the workings and historical underpinnings of the Israeli government comes from Don Peretz, *The Government and Politics of Israel* (Boulder, CO: The Westview Press, 1979), pp. 141–169; and Safran, pp. 126–160.

37. Peretz.

38. See Samih K. Farsoun, "The Palestinians, The PLO and US Foreign Policy," *Arab-American Affairs*, No. 1, Summer 1982, pp. 81–94.

39. Interview with Khalidi, 2 April 1980; also see Farsoun, p. 85.

40. The text of this 1969 agreement known as the "Cairo Agreement" is contained in Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for International Affairs, 1979), pp. 185–187.

41. Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter, *Fire in Beirut* (New York: Stein and Day Publishing, 1984), p. 28.

42. In addition to their well known aid to such Central American countries as Guatemala, the Israelis have also recently sought to garner American support in such unlikely places as the American Evangelical movement. At Prime Minister Begin's insistence, the 1980 winner of the Vladimir Jabotinsky Award was the Reverend Jerry Falwell of the politically active Moral Majority. In addition, Begin invited the Reverend Bailey Smith, who created a storm of protest by declaring that "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew," for a visit to Israel. See for

example, David K. Shipler, "Israel is Cultivating Unlikely New Friends," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1981, p. A2.

43. Khouri, p. 377.

44. Neff, *Jerusalem*, p. 173.

45. Bavly and Salpeter, p. 28.

46. Talcott W. Seelye, "Can the PLO Be Brought To The Negotiating Table," *Arab-American Affairs*, No. 1, (Summer 1982), pp. 75–80

47. Farsoun, p. 92.

III. ESCALATION IN LEBANON, 1981–1982

I know that whoever sets his foot in Lebanon has sunk into the Lebanon swamp.[1]

Yizhak Rabin, 1985

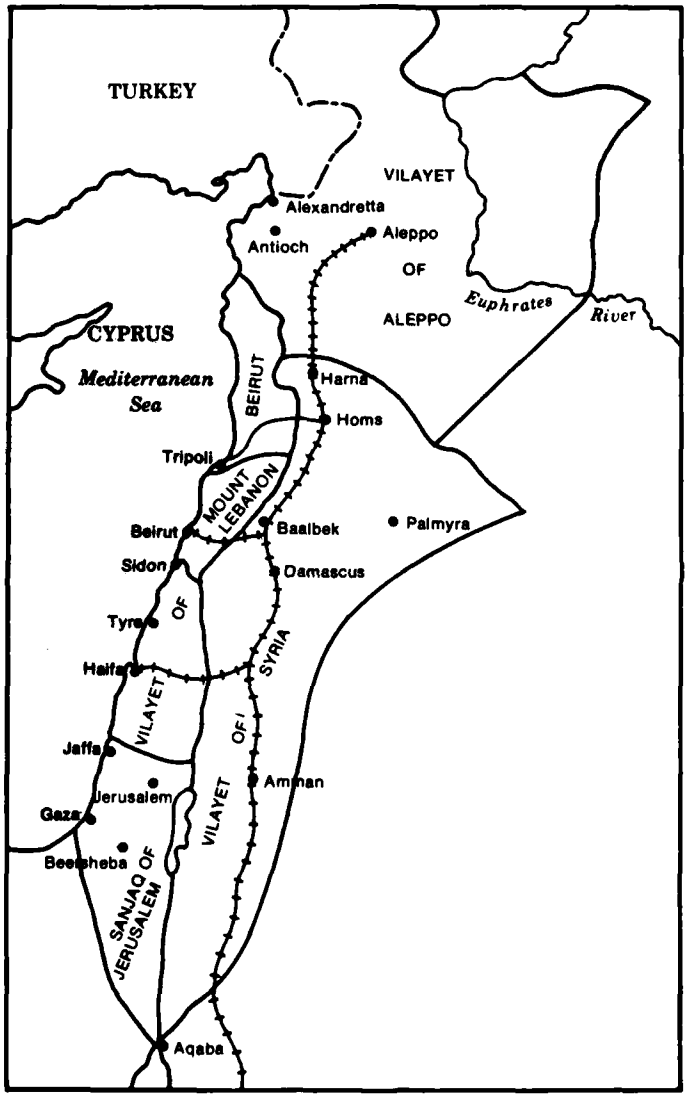
Like all of the modern Middle Eastern states, Lebanon is a creation, not an evolution. Its present borders reflect neither natural nor national boundaries, but simply the whims of the French administration assigned to control it following the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.

In other ways, Lebanon is a state unlike many others. It has a culture and history that have given it a closer link to the West than other Arab states. That link has been both its blessing and its curse.

In 1649, the Ottoman Sultan, who ruled Lebanon as one of his provinces, granted to King Louis XIV of France the privilege of "adopting" the Maronite Christian community of the small area of Mount Lebanon (see Map 1). These Maronite Christians had previously established a relationship with the Pope and were already quite familiar with Western ideas and thought. With this connection, the Maronites hoped to cultivate a patron who would protect them from being overwhelmed by the great Muslim sea that existed all around them.

It was natural that the Ottoman Sultan would allow such an association. The Ottomans ruled a far-flung and multinational empire very loosely, and had it organized primarily along religious lines known as *millets*. Giving this

MAP 1: Lebanon Under the Ottomans



Source: Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1979), © 1979 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Used with permission.

small Christian community a link to other Christians was hardly something that they would have considered unusual. Nonetheless, there were enormous implications.

The Maronite community of Mount Lebanon grew prosperous and quite well educated. By 1861 it had established an early *majlis*, or parliament, that was elected on the basis of religious representation. Thus, the Maronites accepted the idea of democracy, and along with it the principle that representation in the elective ruling establishment would be based on religion. This was a wedding of western thought with the normal organization of the intricate Ottoman governmental system—wherein the confession of faith became an element in government. The confessional system of Lebanon was born.[2]

TWENTIETH CENTURY LEBANON

As Lebanon entered the twentieth century, its Maronite community was clearly dominant. Its members considered themselves to be "from" but not "of" the Middle East and were as comfortable with French as Arabic. Many were better versed in French literature than that of their native language. As one scholar has described it,

> Their spiritual and cultural Meccas were Rome and Paris, respectively. Their mythology stressed their non-Arab or pre-Arab ancestry. To these Maronites, the French-protected Grand Liban of which they were at once the core, linchpin, raison d'être, and chief beneficiary, was an act of historic justice. It was tantamount to the lifting of a putative Moslem siege laid as early as the 7th century with the advent of Islam.[3]

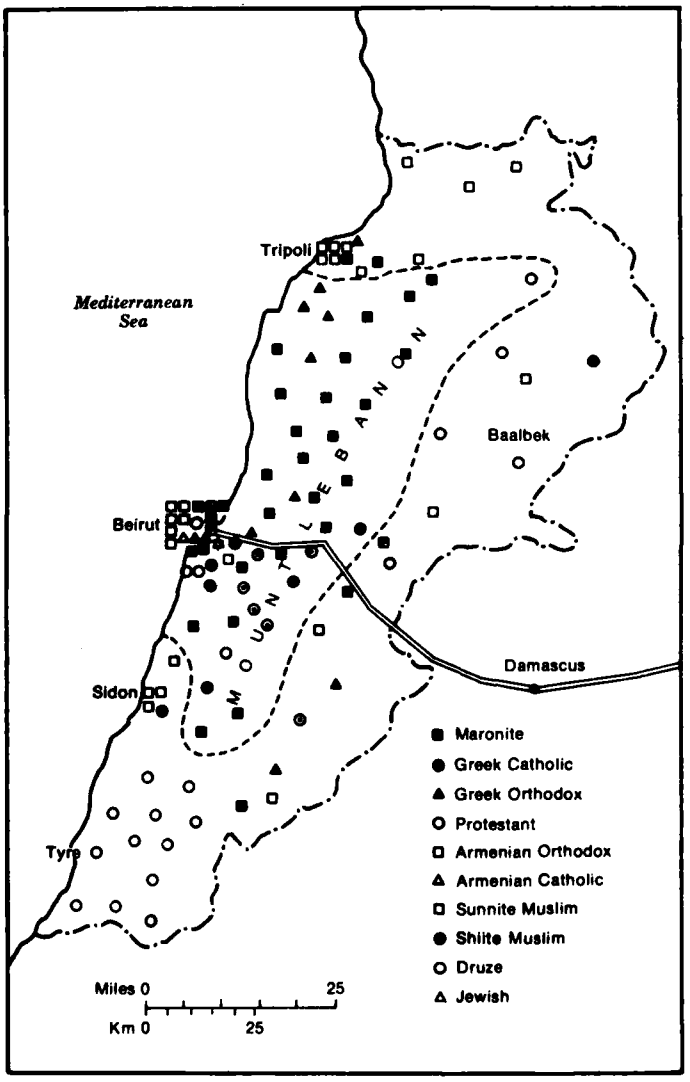
Primarily because of this French connection, France was given the Mandate for Lebanon and Syria by the Paris Peace Conference following World War I which allocated the former territories of the Ottoman Empire. Although the

area was supposed to be ruled as separate parts of one political entity, the French immediately took steps to divide Lebanon from Syria, enlarging considerably the territory of the former. This action, taken in part because the French desired to weaken the position of the Muslims of western Syria while simultaneously ensuring that the Christians would require continued French protection, formed the basis for modern Lebanon. The final dimensions of the country included Mount Lebanon, the traditional Maronite enclave, as well as the Bekaa Valley, and the Anti-Lebanon, the mountain range to the east above Damascus, the Syrian capital.

In 1919, the French established the first native Lebanese government when the old *majlis* was restored. When this was replaced by a newly elected council, the system of religious representation was restored, and thus the confessional principles in government of the previous century were perpetuated. This was codified in a constitution written in 1926 that stated how the seats in the executive, legislative, and civil services were to be equitably distributed among the major confessional groups (see Map 2). Unwilling to allow things to run their natural course, however, the French controlled the actual distributions and avoided holding a regular census. One was held in 1922, and a second, with certain procedural questions, in 1932. Based on the 1932 census, the Christians were declared to be the majority sect (which they unquestionably were, at the time) and were granted the preponderance of political and administrative power—a conclusion quite satisfactory to the French.[4] There has never been another census conducted in Lebanon.

When France fell in 1940, it meant the effective end of French rule in Lebanon and Syria. Urged by the British, who still controlled Palestine to the south, two Lebanese leaders, Bishara Khoury and a Pan-Arabist Sunni Muslim,

MAP 2: Confessional Groups Within Lebanon



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Riyad Solh, established the National Pact of 1943, paving the way for a stable Lebanese government and independence from France.

The National Pact called for the division of political power in Lebanon along confessional lines. In exchange for a Muslim pledge to drop demands for participation in a greater Arab union, Lebanese Christians agreed to renounce Western protection and limit their association with the French. In addition, the former constitutional provisions for the equitable distribution of power were slightly redefined. In terms of high office, it was agreed that the most powerful national position, that of President of Lebanon, would always be held by a Maronite Christian while the Prime Minister would be a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the House a Shiite. The House itself would be divided so that there would be six Christian representatives for every five Muslims. Since the President was directly elected by the Parliament and, therefore, only indirectly elected by the people, the allocation of the principle governmental positions would be preserved so long as the distribution of House seats remained unchanged. This system of parliamentary distribution explains why the number of seats has always been divisible by eleven: to allow the maintenance of the specified 6:5 ratio.

Certain factors began to upset the delicate balance in Lebanon shortly after the establishment of the National Pact. These have been magnified through the intervening years. First, the 1948 war created a significant influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon, a demographic change that added to the numbers of Muslims in the country. Second, during the mid-1950s, the heyday of Arab nationalism, the Pan-Arab idea that the Muslims had agreed to renounce in 1943 became, once again, the rage of Arab intellectual circles. This put pressure on the political system and led to the

Crisis of 1958 in which the United States first landed Marines in Beirut. Third, the second influx of Palestinians in 1970, following the war in Jordan during which King Hussein expelled the PLO, added to the Muslim population.

The fact that the Christians were the more educated, prosperous, and privileged segment of the society meant that they were experiencing the lowest birth rate. Therefore, in addition to the political factors which were serving to upset the confessional balance, the course of nature was also weighing heavily against the peaceful perpetuation of the Lebanese system.

Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Palestinians in Lebanon launched a new guerrilla campaign against Israel which shortly created a rising spiral of destruction as the Israelis retaliated with increasing strength. Major segments of Lebanese society began to take sides with certain Christians and others of the political right, objecting to the damage being caused by Palestinian actions, while a broader, Muslim-dominated left supported continued confrontation.

The relations between the different Lebanese confessional groups began to deteriorate as a result and, on 13 April 1975, a group of prominent Lebanese Christians of the Phalange Party, the most powerful of the Maronite political organizations, was attacked by an unknown number of assailants firing from a passing car. One prominent Phalangist was killed and several others seriously wounded. Later in the day, the Phalangists retaliated, killing 28 Palestinians on a bus passing through the same neighborhood. This was Lebanon's Sarajevo and the country plunged into a period of deadly civil war.

By mid-1976, a coalition of the National Front, a leftist-Muslim alliance, and the Palestinians, under Arafat and the PLO, had gained the upper hand. Then, in one of

the surprising moves of the decade, the Syrian Army entered the war on the side of the Christians, saving them from what appeared to be certain destruction. Evidently fearing that the success of the Muslim left could lead to a new, radicalized Lebanon which would serve as a lightning rod for Israeli action, and concerned that this could drag it into a war under adverse circumstances, Damascus decided to intervene to support the status quo. Later, when it appeared that the Phalange and its allies were about to fatally cripple the PLO and the Muslims, the Syrians switched sides.

By 1977 the Syrian occupation had taken on a certain legitimacy as Saudi pressure forced Damascus to limit the extent of its control over Lebanon which by then had become quite extensive. The Arab League stepped in and designated the Syrian Army in Lebanon as the "Arab Deterrent Force" and the context of the 1969 Cairo Agreement was reactivated, giving the PLO considerable license. For the Lebanese, the country became more divided than ever as the people of Beirut separated themselves into Christian and Muslim enclaves, and the Maronites expanded the small port of Junieh, north of Beirut, in an effort to give themselves an economic and transportation system independent of the rest of Lebanon.

During this period, Israel began to provide considerable support to the Maronite community, particularly the Phalange Party of Pierre Gemayel. By the summer of 1982, they were very closely allied in a joint effort to control the activities and influence of the PLO.[5]

Tensions continued along the Lebanese border between Israel and the PLO and in March 1978 the Israelis invaded Lebanon up to the Litani River, following a PLO terrorist attack. Under American pressure, Israel withdrew and was replaced by the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Israelis also left behind a renegade

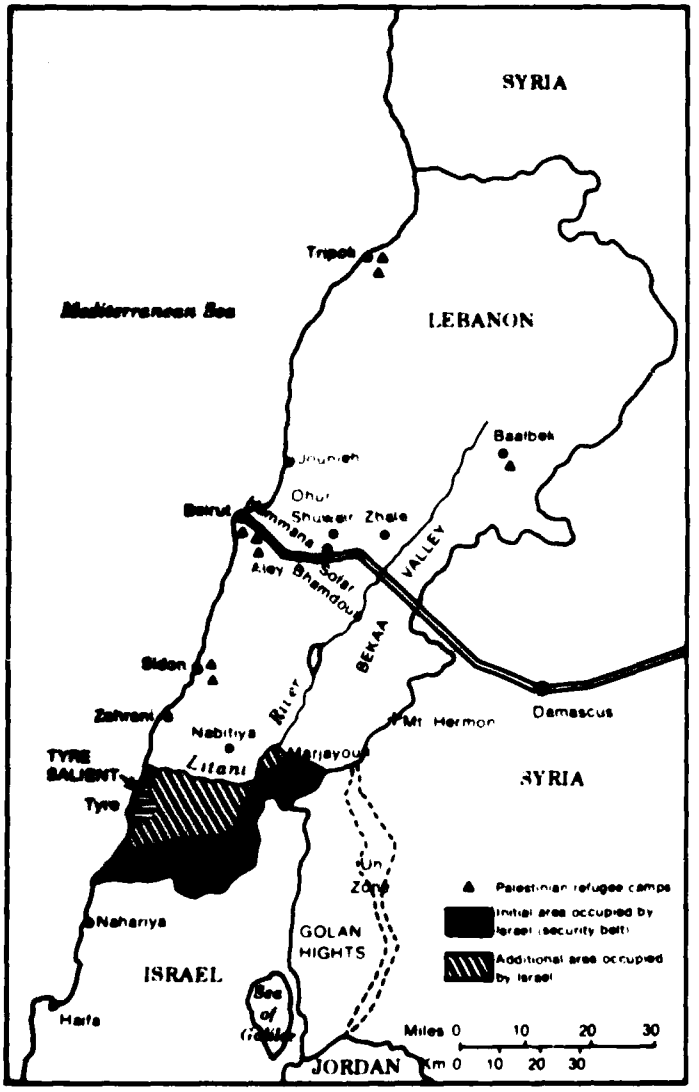
Lebanese major named Saad Haddad whose small force they equipped and sustained to create a second buffer for themselves as well as a check on the effectiveness of UNIFIL (see Map 3). Some argued that Haddad also gave Israelis a built-in excuse to recross the border to support their little ally whenever they deemed it necessary.

During 1979 and 1980, when the attention of the Israelis and United States focused on the Camp David Agreement and the subsequent Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, a calmer phase ensued. During the early stages of the treaty, and the Palestinian Autonomy Talks which followed it, all major actors throughout the region slowed the pace of their normal activities while they attempted to determine the nature of the changes occurring. This created a lull in the Lebanon during which the factions tried to strengthen their positions relative to each other. The Israeli support of the Phalange Party, particularly in the military arena, now reached new heights. The Israelis had created for themselves a powerful ally capable of exercising considerable influence in the chaotic world of Lebanese politics.

1981: SETTING THE STAGE

During 1981, the picture began to change for numerous reasons. First, the Israeli government became considerably more hard-line and doctrinaire in terms of the nationalistic tendencies of Prime Minister Begin. The two important cabinet officers who had served as a check on Begin during his first government, Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, had both resigned in protest by late 1980. Dayan was replaced by Begin's old political colleague Yitzhak Shamir, (who as a member of the Knesset had opposed the Camp David Agreement), while Begin followed the tradition of Ben Gurion and assumed the Defense post himself. This removed men from office who were considered to be key

MAP 3: Lebanon After March 1978



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obstacles to adventurous Israeli actions in the immediate region.[6]

Second, the Reagan administration assumed office in the United States. Because of his campaign rhetoric, Reagan was considered to be the most pro-Israeli President since Harry Truman. Spurred by his foreign policy adviser, Richard Allen, Reagan had emphasized his belief that Israel was a strategic asset in addition to being an ally of the United States. He indicated little interest in the Palestinian issue. In reference to the construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Arab territories, a major program being fostered by the Begin government, Reagan broke with the Carter administration and previous US policy by stating that the settlements in his view were "not illegal" and were allowed by the provisions of UN Resolution 242.[7] This was the kind of talk Begin wanted to hear. It signaled to him that the rough days with Carter were coming to an end and that Washington would soon reveal a new set of concerns—which it did.

Third, the Syrians and PLO became more active in Lebanon. Concerned about the growing strength of the Phalangist and other Christian groups, Syria launched several military actions in the spring of 1981 against Christian-controlled areas, particularly the town of Zahle. Responding to requests from his Lebanese allies for help, Begin used the Israeli Air Force (IAF) to relieve the pressure on the town and in the process downed two Syrian helicopters. The Syrians responded by deploying SAM–6 missile batteries into the Bekaa Valley, expanding their air defense umbrella. Seeing this as a military threat, Begin threatened to destroy the missile batteries unless they were withdrawn. Only pressure from Washington prevented Israeli action.[8] During this same period, the PLO became more active in its areas of Lebanon, further complicating the problem. In response, President Reagan sent Ambassador Philip Habib, a

retired diplomat, to the Middle East in an effort to find a solution to end the growing confrontation.[9]

Facing an election in late June, Prime Minister Begin was in no mood to compromise. Nonetheless, Habib's efforts succeeded in defusing the situation. The respite, however, was short-lived: on 7 June 1981, Begin's air force destroyed the Osirak nuclear reactor outside Baghdad, claiming that it was being prepared for the construction of nuclear weapons for use against Israel. This created a considerable international controversy which left the United States and Israel on different sides in the ensuing United Nations debate.[10]

In July, the situation heated up again when PLO forces in southern Lebanon launched an artillery barrage against Israeli urban areas in the northern Galilee and the Metulla finger. Israel responded with a devastating attack on Beirut, killing hundreds of Lebanese civilians. This retaliatory attack occurred while President Reagan was attending a summit conference of Western powers in Canada. When the Europeans issued a strong denunciation of the Israeli action, the President was forced to take steps expressing American displeasure and he further delayed the delivery of the F-16 fighters promised to Jerusalem.

By late July, Ambassador Habib had negotiated an agreement between Israel and the PLO establishing a truce in southern Lebanon. Although no paper was actually signed, and the American link with the PLO was handled through Lebanese intermediaries, a cease-fire went into effect and the shelling came to an end. Shortly afterwards, there were cries from various circles in Israel that Begin had added to the PLO's growing stature by indirectly negotiating with it. Indeed, one month later, Arafat made a visit to Japan in which he received a welcome on a par with those normally afforded to visiting heads of state.[11] Through the rest of the year, however, the cease-fire held.

Still, there remained the possibility for trouble. Clearly, Israel and the PLO had differing ideas on what the terms of the cease-fire actually were—differences which became more significant as the year wore on. The Israelis claimed that the cease-fire was total, binding the PLO to avoid any attacks against any Jews anywhere. The PLO claimed that the cease-fire only applied to attacks directly across the Lebanese border. As for the United States, it broadened this somewhat, applying it to the flank areas, thereby including incursions into northern Israel from the sea. This perceptual and legalistic difference was to have major consequences in the spring of 1982.[13]

The last significant occurrence of 1981, setting the stage for 1982, was the appointment of a new Israeli cabinet following Begin's unexpected reelection. On 4 August, Begin acquiesced to considerable pressure and appointed as the Defense Minister former General Ariel Sharon. Sharon had served during the first Begin government as Agricultural Minister. In that position, he had been the driving force behind the settlements program that Washington had found so troublesome. He had long coveted the Defense portfolio, but had been denied it because of the perception in Israel that he was an ultra-hawk with tendencies toward extreme action. As one close observer commented, "Begin will do what must be done; Sharon will do ten times what must be done."[14]

Although he had been the commander of the Irgun during the pre-state period, Begin was not a military man and had little military training. He was visibly awed by Israel's senior military officers and according to one source, "felt inferior in their company."[15] Because of Sharon's military reputation, Begin was strongly disposed to defer to his judgment on matters of security—but there was also a personal

component. Not only was Sharon's grandmother the midwife who had delivered Begin, but the general's grandfather and the Prime Minister's father had been best friends.[15]

Sharon had used these personal connections to advantage during his tenure as the Minister of Agriculture. Championing the cause of the more fervent settlements advocates, Sharon pushed numerous settlement projects through the cabinet by arguing that they were essential to security. To create "facts on the ground" during the Sinai negotiations with Egypt, Sharon had even proposed that Jerusalem construct dummy settlements. His opponent in many of these cabinet debates, Begin's first Defense Minister, Ezer Weizman, wrote,

> Sharon always had the knack of presenting his views in such a manner that made them acceptable to most—if not all—of the cabinet members. His fingers ran up and down the maps, which many of the ministers were incapable of understanding. There were occasions when I suspected that the markings on Sharon's maps were not totally accurate. In any case, not one of the ministers was prepared to concede that he had not the faintest idea what it was all about.[16]

In Weizman's opinion, whenever Sharon used the word "security" to describe some settlement or road junction, his words "were taken as divine gospel."[17]

As Defense Minister, Sharon quickly began to plan for a war to wipe out the PLO militarily rather than making further efforts to deal with it either politically or diplomatically. The Chief of Staff of the IDF, Lieutenant General Rafael Eitan, who had assumed his post in April 1978 after "Operation Litani", shared Sharon's feelings. Therefore, shortly after the July 1981 cease-fire in Lebanon, the Israeli government began planning to invade Lebanon.[18] By January, three plans of varying scope existed for waging a potential war against the PLO.[19]

During the next few months, Sharon became quite talkative about his ideas for dealing with the PLO. A strategy known as the "Sharon Plan" was described in the press, explaining how the Defense Minister planned to drive the PLO from Lebanon and back into Jordan where they would join with the Jordanian Palestinian population and force King Hussein to yield them power, or at least, greater political participation. This would add strength to the familiar argument of the Israeli political nationalists that there was already a Palestinian state—namely Jordan—while simultaneously reducing pressures from the West to curtail the settlements program. Initially reported in *Time* magazine, this revelation of Sharon's thinking created a political storm in Israel and set the stage for the Defense Minister's altercation with *Time* which culminated in his 1984 lawsuit against the magazine.[30]

During this period, leading into the early spring of 1982, Prime Minister Begin was also issuing statements indicating the hardening of the Israeli position towards the PLO—despite the fact that the truce along the border was holding. Indeed, one American officer serving as an observer along the border noted that, "The PLO is bending over backwards to maintain the cease-fire."[31] In addition to the doctrinal positions of Begin and Sharon, their concerns about the PLO were being magnified by two additional factors, one internal and the other external.

First, the occupied West Bank was becoming increasingly hostile and difficult to control. The Israeli position on the second phase of Camp David, the Palestinian Autonomy Agreement, had grown so narrow that it was far from offering the Arabs of the occupied territories anything meaningful in terms of self-rule. This was seen as bad faith on the part of Begin, who had himself presented the autonomy idea, and began to stir local Arab officials against the government. Furthermore, the settlements were continuing

to go up throughout the territories and the government was encouraging Jewish settlement through a program offering subsidized loans and low rental agreements. There was also considerable dislike among the Arabs, particularly the local mayors, for the civilian administration of the territories established in November 1981.

This led to a rising wave of unrest and protest that the Israeli Army was forced to control with increasingly harsh measures. The rigor of this duty began to show within the IDF. General Danny Matt, a highly decorated and respected soldier who served as the senior Israeli officer in the occupied territories, resigned in protest after the establishment of a civilian administration. In May, a group of reservists, upset by the severity of the policies they were ordered to carry out, called a press conference to denounce the government policy.[22] By late spring, the West Bank was a hotbed of discontent and the IDF was growing increasingly restive about its difficult mission there.

Begin and Sharon attributed these difficulties to the PLO. As one observer noted, "The Israeli government believes it has a Palestinian problem because of the PLO; not that it has a PLO problem because of the Palestinians."[23] Although several voices within Israel's Arab community began to insist that the government's policies were exciting the troubles, Begin and Sharon continued to feel that their problem lay to the north in Beirut.[24]

The second concern of Begin and Sharon, one reflecting an external consideration, was the relative diplomatic success of the PLO during a period of Israeli decline. As Prime Minister, Begin was clearly the most internationally disliked official in Israeli history—a position which his actions throughout 1981 solidified.[25] In his zeal to stop the Reagan administration's AWACs sale to Saudi Arabia in late 1981, his meddling in American politics had infuriated

even Secretary of State Haig, arguably Israel's most strident supporter in the American government. Earlier, when Ambassador Habib had attempted to draw the Saudis into his effort to establish a cease-fire during the conflict with Syria and the PLO, Begin had denounced the effort in a way that was personally insulting to the Saudi royal family. When West Germany had explored the possibility of military assistance for Riyadh, Begin angered the entire NATO alliance by launching a pointed, personal attack on Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. All of these actions served to further isolate Israel from the world community, most significantly from those who should by nature have been Jerusalem's closest friends.

Perhaps the greatest blow had fallen when an expected reconciliation with France, following the election of President Francois Mitterrand, fizzled. In March 1982, Mitterrand became the first European Head of State to visit Israel. But during his visit, he issued an unequivocal call for Jerusalem to grant the Palestinians their rights and to allow the establishment of a Palestinian state in an effort to broaden regional peace. Begin quickly denounced this proposal, terminating the brief thaw in Israeli-French relations.[26]

During the same period, Arafat was winning one success after another on the international scene. Having enjoyed good relations with Eastern bloc countries for some time, the granting of full diplomatic status from the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Hungary was of no particular importance; but Arafat was making matching gains in the West as well. In addition to the Venice Declaration of 1980, when the European Economic Community (EEC) members called for direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO, Arafat had now achieved further status. He had become a regular visitor to Austria and won diplomatic recognition

from Greece. What seriously concerned Israel was the apparent spread of this tendency across the Atlantic.

In the United States, several members of Congress were becoming vocal advocates of American relations with the PLO, and former Senator James Abourezk had become a Washington lobbyist for Palestinian interests. But the real shock for Jerusalem came in the wake of President Sadat's funeral when former Presidents Carter and Ford told reporters at an impromptu news conference that the United States eventually would have to deal with the PLO. When added to an earlier statement by former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who took much the same position, it seemed clear that there were new, and potentially dangerous, currents in American thinking on the issue. From the Israeli perspective, this deterioration of their international diplomatic position was considerably more serious than the firing of a few random rockets into the Galilee.[27]

As the summer of 1982 approached, Jerusalem had its hands full. Disturbances were accelerating on the West Bank in the wake of the new civilian administrations' dismissal of four Arab mayors for their failure to cooperate with Israeli authorities. The army was forced to fire into the demonstrators and several Arab youths had been killed. On 26 April, the Israelis turned over the Sinai to the Egyptians, in accordance with the Peace Agreement of 1979, but not before hundreds of Israelis protesting the destruction of the Sinai settlements had to be forcibly removed by Israeli troops. After the Sinai withdrawal, Sharon announced that this evacuation represented the limit of Israeli concessions and two days later Begin announced the opening of six new settlements on the West Bank. For its actions on the West Bank and the Golan, Israel was subjected to a barrage of condemnations by the United Nations although the United

States managed to protect Israel from some of the more pointed attacks by using its veto in the Security Council.

Along the Lebanese border, the cease-fire held despite certain incidents. On 21 April, an Israeli lieutenant was killed inside Lebanon when he stepped on a mine. Although the mine's provenance was not known, Israel launched an air strike against PLO positions in Lebanon, killing 23 people. On 10 May, a bomb exploded on an Israeli bus, wounding two children; Israel responded with another air attack into Lebanon, killing six people and wounding another 20. The PLO launched an artillery barrage on northern Israel in retaliation and both sides accused the other of violating the July 1981 cease-fire. During this same period, reports began to circulate of a large military build-up of Israeli forces in the north.

As tensions slowly rose, the newly appointed US negotiator for the Palestinian Autonomy Talks, Richard Fairbanks, arrived in Israel. The talks had stalled over Israel's insistence that they be held in Jerusalem, a venue that Egypt rejected since Jerusalem was itself one of the items to be negotiated. Israel had delayed the talks since mid-1980, before the American Presidential election, and enjoyed the respite of 1981 as the Reagan administration decided how to approach the issue. But with Fairbanks' appointment in February 1982, Washington had indicated that it was prepared to resume the dialogue. The Israeli government, however, was not and undoubtedly raised the venue issue, knowing that Egyptian President Mubarak would find the proposed site unacceptable. In addition to all of the other pressures, Israel now had to deal with a renewed American interest in the status of the West Bank and delivery on Begin's Camp David promise to solve the Palestinian problem "in all its aspects."[28] The stage was now fully set for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the major international drama of the summer of 1982.

ENDNOTES

1. This is a quote from the new Israeli Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, made on the eve of Israel's unilateral decision to withdraw from Lebanon. See "An Interview With Yitzhak Rabin," *Time*, 11 February 1985, p. 44.

2. Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, 3rd. ed. (Boulder, CO: The Westview Press, 1978), pp. 335–368.

3. Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for International Studies, 1979), p. 34.

4. Khalidi, p. 35.

5. Peretz, pp. 359–363; and Khalidi, pp. 47–65.

6. Amos Perlmutter, "Begin's Rhetoric and Sharon's Tactics," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, no. 1, (Fall 1982), p. 72.

7. See "An Interview With Ronald Reagan," *Time*, 30 June 1980, p. 15, and Daniel Sutherland, "Reagan's Mideast Policy: Pragmatism Not Ideology," *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 May 1981, p. 3.

8. Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter, *Fire in Beirut* (New York: Stein and Day Publishing, 1984), pp. 80–81.

9. President Reagan appointed Habib on 5 May 1981 and he arrived in the Middle East eight days later. For a discussion on the Syrian role see John Yemma, "Syria Beefs Up Its Armor in Lebanon Just As The Talks Begin," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 7 May 1981, p. 9. The chronology section of "America and the World," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 736–737, gives a useful sequential account.

10. See M. Thomas Davis, "The Politics of Begin's Baghdad Raid," *Naval War College Review*, March–April 1982, p. 34.

11. See Henry S. Stokes, "Japan Sees Arafat Visit As Chance To Seek Wider Accord In Middle East," *New York Times*, 13 October 1981, p. A10.

12. This description of the cease-fire agreement negotiated by Ambassador Habib was given by a State Department official who participated in the process.

13. Conversation with Professor Nadav Safran, 8 May 1982.

14. Bavly and Salpeter, p. 74.

15. Ezer Weizman, *The Battle For Peace* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1981), p. 141.

16. Weizman, p. 142.

17. Weizman, p. 222.

18. Bavly and Salpeter, p. 80.

19. Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 60.

20. See "Sharon's Plan," *Time*, 1 March 1982, p. 24. For some of the related actions see "Begin Puts the World on Notice," *FBIS*, 24 February 1982, p. 15; and "Sharon Details 'Four Red Lines' in *Match*," *FBIS*, 25 February 1984, p. 13.

21. This comment was made by an American officer who served as an observer in south Lebanon during the 1982 invasion.

22. M. Thomas Davis, "Recent Events in the Middle East: Continuing Dilemmas for US Policy," *Naval War College Review*, July–August 1983, p. 9. Hereafter cited as Davis, *Dilemmas*.

23. This observation came from an official of the US State Department.

24. Rafik Halabi, *The West Bank Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1981), p. 117 and p. 231.

25. Bavly and Salpeter, p. 75.

26. Davis, *Dilemmas*, p. 8.

27. Davis, *Dilemmas*, p. 9.

28. See the discussion on the evolution of Prime Minister Begin's proposal for Palestinian Autonomy in Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: The Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), pp. 269–429.

IV. THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR

Begin and Sharon share the same dream: Sharon is the dream's hatchet man. That dream is to annihilate the PLO, douse any vestiges of Palestinian nationalism, crush PLO allies and collaborators in the West Bank, and eventually force the Palestinians there into Jordan, and cripple if not end, the Palestinian nationalist movement.[1]

Amos Perlmutter, 1982

On 3 June 1982, Israeli Ambassador Shlomo Argov was shot in London. In the US State Department, both the diplomatic cable system and the commercial news wire services came alive with information from various sources on the nature of the attack. Immediately, the PLO, through its number two man, Salah Khalaf, announced that it had nothing to do with the attack, but that it was prepared to respond to any "Israeli aggression." Cairo reported that its own ambassador to London had been with Argov and narrowly escaped being shot himself. In Britain, the police quickly rounded up three suspects who eventually turned out to be the assailants. One was a Syrian intelligence officer (although one source claimed he was an Iraqi), the other two were associated with the renegade Abu Nidal group.

On 4 June Israel launched a major air attack against PLO positions in southern Lebanon and Beirut. The following day reports coming to Washington indicated that Israeli mobilization along the Lebanese border was complete. The PLO responded with an artillery attack

across the border into northern Israel. The PLO attacks against Israel evidently did little damage, wounding eight people and contributing to one death from a heart attack; PLO and Lebanese casualties from Israel's air raids numbered about 45 killed and 150 wounded. Secretary of State Haig, accompanying President Reagan to the Versailles Economic Conference, described the situation as serious. He was correct. At 11 a.m. on 6 June, Israel pushed through the positions of UNIFIL and into Lebanon.

During the year preceding the event, the Israelis had prepared three plans for an invasion of their northern neighbor. The first called for a campaign directed against the PLO in the south to stamp out artillery and terrorist positions threatening northern Israel. This operation would avoid an engagement with the Syrians and advance 40 kilometers to the north, as measured from the town of Rosh Hanikra. Basically, this plan was a slightly expanded version of Operation Litani in 1978.

The second plan also avoided war with the Syrians, but moved the IDF north to Beirut for a link up with Israel's Phalangist allies who would enter Beirut to destroy the PLO left in the city. Again, a 40-kilometer distance was mentioned, but this time it was measured from Metulla, Israel's northernmost border town in the Galilee finger, bringing the IDF on line just south of the Lebanese capital.

The third plan, known as the "Big Plan", envisioned a war against both the PLO and the Syrians clearing them from southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley up to the outskirts of Beirut. Again the 40 kilometer distance was measured from Metulla, and the Phalangists would carry the brunt of the fighting inside Beirut.

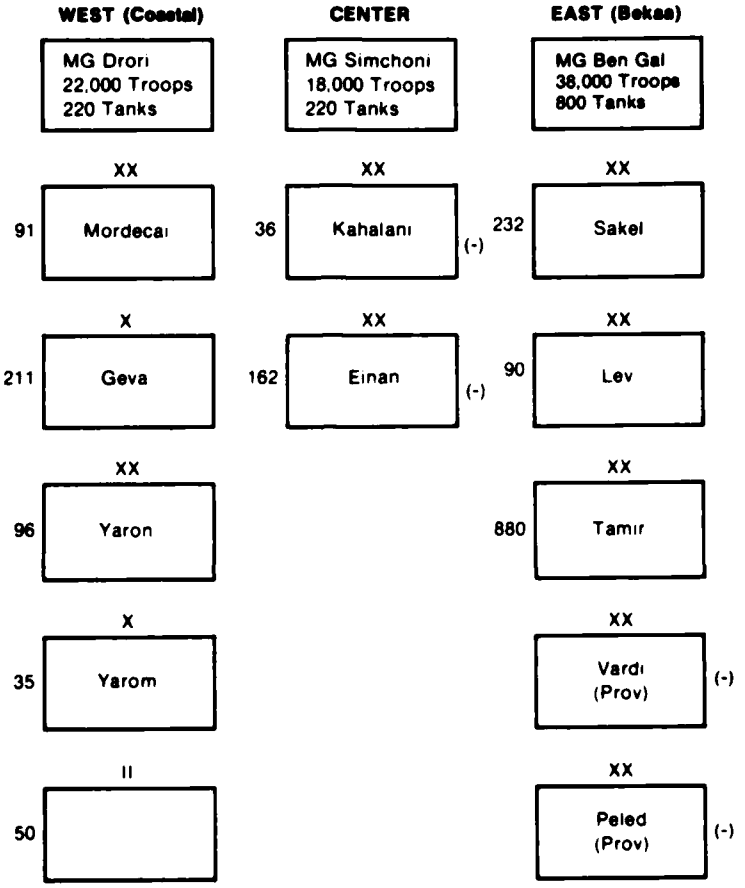
The Israeli Cabinet met on the evening of 5 June to review the situation and decided at that time to give the

Defense Minister permission to cross the border. It is not clear what plan the Cabinet authorized for implementation, but considering the early Israeli identification of the 40-kilometer line and the insistence that Jerusalem hoped to avoid a conflict with Syria, the evidence indicates that they had initially opted for plan one or two.[3]

Sharon had proposed a military solution for the PLO problem several times, but had been outvoted in the Cabinet in his efforts to get approval for either the "small" or "big" wars. Having won authorization for the attack at the 5 June meeting, Sharon evidently decided to fight the war the way he preferred and to inform the Cabinet only as required, using the vaguest military terms to leave the impression that expanded efforts were necessary to protect Israeli forces from PLO and Syrian counterattacks. The Chief of Staff, General Eitan, later declared on several occasions that he and the army never received any instructions to limit their advance to 40 kilometers.[4] Additionally, the Syrians initially made an effort to avoid a clash with the Israelis by withdrawing their checkpoints from the southern area as far down the coast as Sidon and Tyre.[5]

The Israelis organized themselves into 9 division-sized formations (see Figure 3) for the attack and crossed the border in strength at three locations. The forces in the west and center came under the normal command structure of the General Officer in Charge (GOC) North, Major General Amir Drori, and his deputy, Major General Uri Simchoni. In the east, opposite the Syrians, the Israelis established, for the first time in their history, a corps headquarters under Major General Avigdor Ben Gal, known in Israel as "Yanoosh," one of the country's most celebrated soldiers and a hero on the Golan during the 1973 war. Yanoosh was called home to assume his command from a sabbatical of study at Harvard University.

FIGURE 3: Israeli Tactical Organization



6 JUNE 1982

At 11 a.m. on 6 June, the three forces moved out. The late morning hour was evidently unavoidable. Although starting the attack this far into the morning yielded to some extent the element of surprise, as well as sacrificing six hours of daylight, it was politically required because Jerusalem feared that waiting until the dawn of the 7th would subject Israel to political pressure from the United States to cancel the operation.

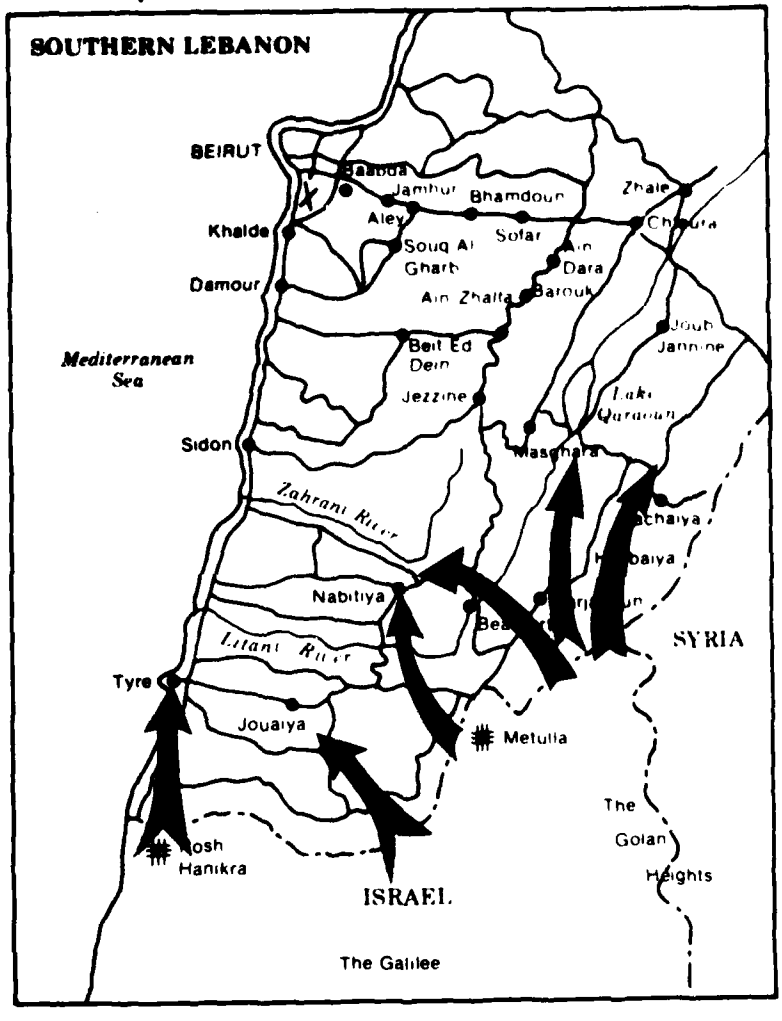
Drori's western force, led by Brigadier General Yitzhak Mordecai's 91st Division, and spearheaded by Colonel Eli Geva's famous 211th Brigade, headed up the coast road towards Tyre (see Map 4). Their mission was to by-pass Tyre, pinning as many PLO in the city as possible, reduce the three PLO camps there, and move rapidly up the coast to Sidon and Damour. One battalion split off early at Tyre and headed east, linking up with a brigade from the center sector at Jouaiya. This caught the PLO in the south in a strong vise.

Brigadier General Amos Yaron and his 96th Division assembled in Ashdod and Nahariya along the Israeli coast and were loaded aboard amphibious shipping. The first wave sailed from Ashdod with the mission to land just north of Sidon and link up with the other forces coming up from the south. It was to be the largest amphibious operation ever mounted by the IDF.

In the center, the two divisions of Brigadier General Avigdor Kahalani and Brigadier General Menachem Einan basically had supporting missions. Kahalani was to cross the Litani river both north and south of the commanding high ground at Beaufort Castle and capture the key road junction at Nabitiya. An elite reconnaissance battalion was to break off from his advance and attack the castle which had served as a PLO stronghold for years. Having secured the junction at Nabitiya, Kahalani would head towards the coast to link up with Mordecai's division while Einan's division would head north towards Jezzine, and from there along the right flank of the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley, orienting on the Beirut-Damascus highway.

To the east, opposite the Syrian positions in the Bekaa Valley, the Israelis assembled their largest force. Led by Major General Ben Gal, the mission in the eastern sector was to advance into the Bekaa Valley and prevent

MAP 4: Operations - 6 June 1982



the Syrians from either reinforcing from their own territory to the east, or shifting forces to the west in an effort to influence the action along the coastal road. Ben Gal's forces would head up the flanks of the Bekaa, orienting on Hasbaiya and Masghara, as well as up the center directed towards Lake Qaraoun and ultimately Joub Jannine. The Israelis were clearly committing a substantial force to the war in Lebanon. Although the order of battle for the other side is difficult to determine, there were at least two Syrian divisions and no more than 15,000 PLO fighters, loosely organized and controlled.[6]

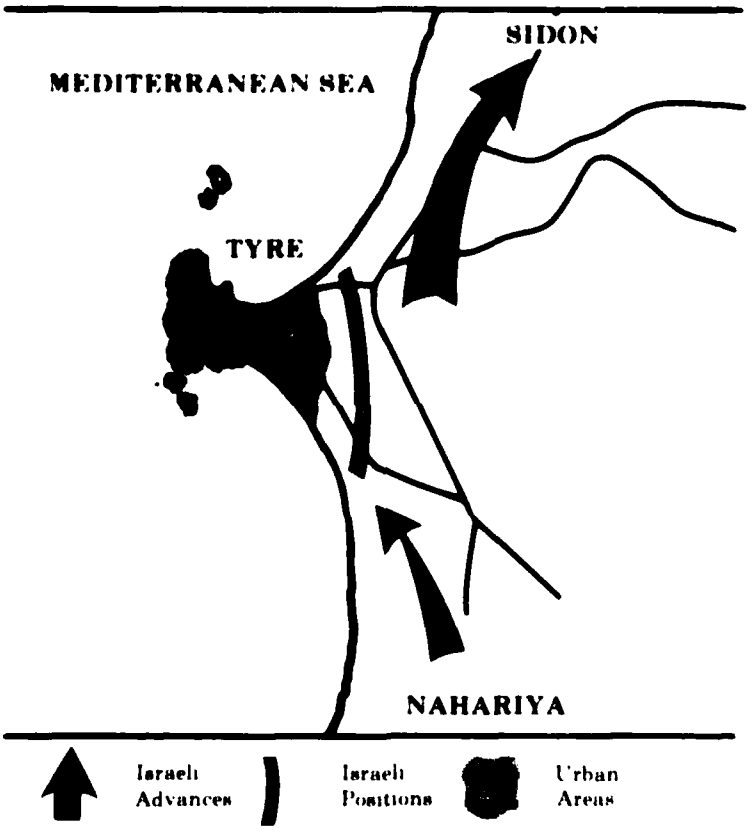
Although it was preceded by a heavy artillery preparation and intensive air strikes, the attack along the coastal road in the west quickly fell behind schedule. The road was narrow and forced the Israelis to advance slowly, creating a monumental traffic jam. PLO fighters, hidden in three groves along either side of the road, fired at the Israelis with RPG's and other antitank weapons, knocking out several armored vehicles. One of Mordecai's lead battalions was supposed to by-pass Tyre, a PLO stronghold, and establish a blocking position to the east of the city, across the neck of the peninsula on which the city is set. Unfortunately, the battalion made a wrong turn and accidentally stumbled into the middle of the city where it was ambushed, further delaying the advance. It was past eight in the evening when Mordecai's units crossed the Litani and headed north toward Sidon.

In the center sector, Kahalani's 36th Division passed on both sides of Beaufort Castle leaving the reconnaissance battalion to secure it. In the dark the battalion began to work its way up the slopes, ultimately fighting a fierce six-hour battle, but by the morning of 7 June, Beaufort was firmly in Israeli hands. Kahalani's main force had experienced great difficulty climbing the Arnoun Heights toward Nabitiya, but by the end of the first day they had secured the road junction north of Nabitiya and the 162d

MAP 5

OPERATIONS AROUND TYRE

6 - 8 JUNE



Division of Brigadier General Einan was passing through on its way to the next crossroads at Jezzine.

In the east, Yanoosh's forces had penetrated into the Bekaa Valley and were moving forward towards the Syrian positions. The 252d Division under Brigadier General Immanuel Sakel, with the assistance of Israeli Army engineers, who bulldozed a road through the Wadi Cheba, had passed Mount Hermon and cleared the town of Hasbaiya. Sakel then oriented his troops to the right and began to advance in the direction of Rachaiya. Brigadier General Giora Lev's 90th Division aimed directly at the Syrian center around Lake Qaraoun and advanced to a point on line with Hasbaiya before halting on the morning of 7 June. The divisional formation of Brigadier General Dan Vardi moved out in the direction of Mashgara and Jezzine followed by Yossi Peled's force, which was to pass through the Vardi brigade commanded by Colonel Hagai Cohen after it seized Jezzine, and then continue north to take control of the Jabaal Barouk mountain ridge and with it the western approaches into the Bekaa. Peled was to block any Syrian reinforcement attempts and be in position to support Einan's 162d Division during its movement to Ain Zhalta.

By the end of the first day, nearly all of the IDF's objectives had been secured although the advance in the west had been slower than anticipated. In the eastern sector, the Israelis had halted along the floor of the Bekaa Valley although Ben Gal's forces were clearly turning the Syrian flanks to the east and west. Except for some harassing artillery fire, the Syrians were offering very little resistance; their missile batteries did not attempt to engage the Israeli Air Force aircraft overflying the battle area. The delay in the center lasted nearly seventy-two hours while Sharon argued persistently for permission to engage the Syrians and drive them from the Bekaa Valley while there was a high

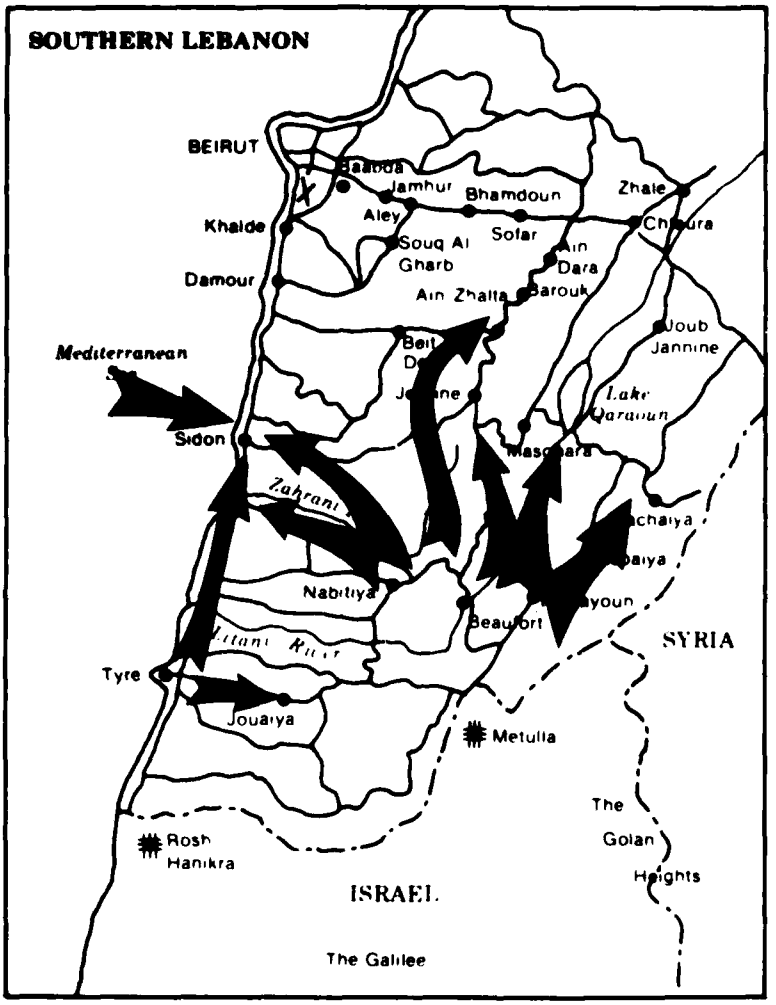
probability of success. But the Cabinet was evidently not eager to engage in a wider war than the one they already had.[7]

The US Department of State followed the events with considerable concern. Although there has been widespread speculation since the invasion over whether Secretary of State Alexander Haig gave the Israelis the go-ahead for their attack, it is very doubtful that such encouragement was given overtly. At worst, during his meeting in Washington with Defense Minister Sharon near the end of May, Haig gave the Israelis a "dim yellow light," but this is not necessarily significant. As one State Department official noted, "It doesn't really matter what Haig gave him, Sharon has been known to run lights of all colors."[8] As the first day of fighting drew to a close, the US government began to examine ways to minimize the damage from Jerusalem's action and control the peripheral effects. As a first step, President Reagan called once again for the services of Ambassador Philip Habib, asking him to go to the Middle East and attempt to arrange a cease-fire.

7 JUNE 1982

As 7 June began, the Israelis continued their air attacks all along the coastal highway leading to Beirut. Reports arriving in Washington immediately raised the issue of Israeli use of cluster munitions in violation of sales agreements. Although one American official stated that there was no way Israel could legally drop a cluster munition in Lebanon, Sharon brushed aside the controversy by declaring that, "In wartime it is necessary to interpret formal agreements differently than in peacetime."[9] As the war intensified, disturbing reports began to indicate that there were extensive civilian casualties throughout Lebanon.

MAP 6: Operations - 7 June 1982



Along the coast, Mordecai's division continued to move towards Sidon while some of his forces struggled to clear the Palestinian camp of Rachidiya outside Tyre (see Map 6). By midday, Mordecai's troops linked up with those of Kahalani at Zaharani Junction, just south of Sidon. In the early morning hours, the Israeli Navy conducted its amphibious operation landing the lead elements of Amos Yaron's 96th Division. Using approximately fourteen landing craft of various types, the Israelis placed ashore the 50th Battalion of the 35th Parachute Brigade, led by Colonel Yarir Yarom, effectively surrounding Sidon in a tight vise. The balance of Yaron's division waited at Nahariya and was landed by turn-around shipping after the first wave. Yarom's assault battalion had been staged further down the coast at Ashdod harbor to avoid detection.

Although Sidon was surrounded, it took some time before the road through the town was opened. To maintain the momentum of the advance, Colonel Geva's 211th Brigade by-passed the city and pushed up the coast road to Damour. A fight erupted in the Ein Hilwe camp outside of Sidon, tying down two Israeli battalions.

In the center, Brigadier General Einan pushed *towards* Jezzine running into a Syrian and PLO force just south of the town. Electing to by-pass the town so as to continue his push towards Beit ed Din, Einan left the enemy forces to the 460th Brigade of Colonel Hagai Cohen, a unit of the Vardi division. Cohen captured the town while the rest of the Vardi division closed towards Mashgara from the south. Brigadier General Lev's division remained in place along the floor of the Bekaa while heavy, mobile Israeli artillery began to set up near Hasbaiya to his south. The arrival of these artillery battalions placed 6 of the 19 Syrian missile batteries in the valley within artillery range. Meanwhile, Sakel continued to move forces along the right flank in the direction of Rachaiya, threatening to

catch the Syrians in a dangerous double envelopment. Whether they wanted to or not, the Syrians were being placed in a position where they would have to react or face the possibility of destruction in detail and a devastating loss by default.[10] Despite the corps command being exercised by Ben Gal, Sharon was spending a considerable amount of time at the Northern Command Post, carefully watching the Syrian situation.[11]

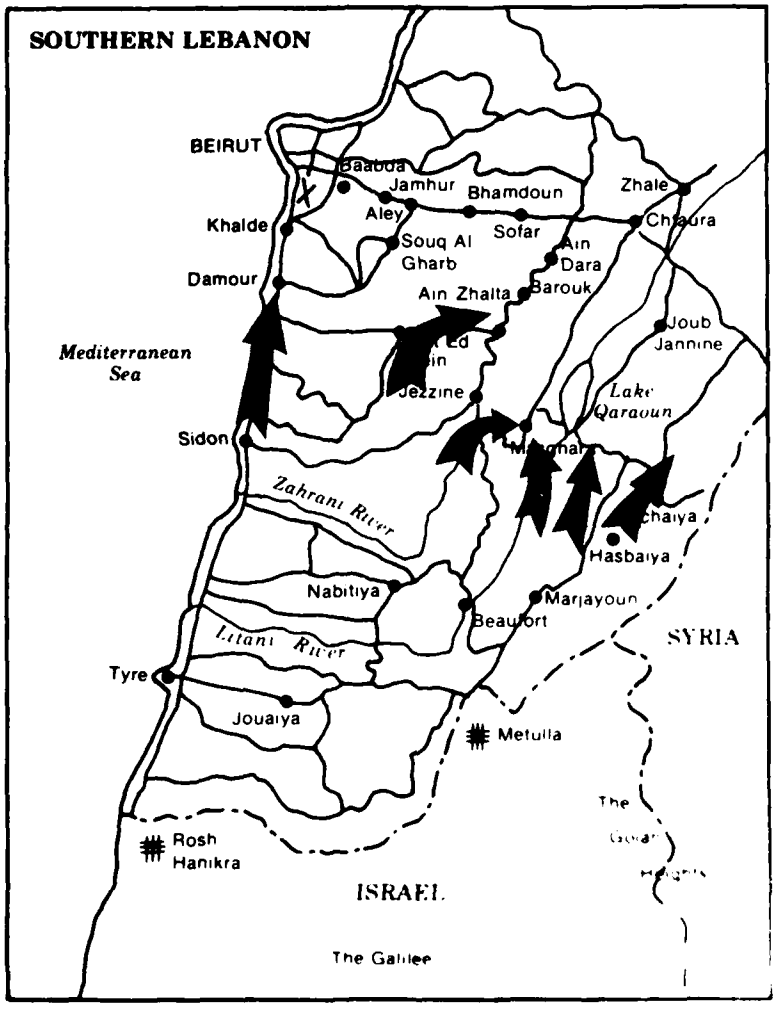
8 JUNE 1982

As 8 June began, anxiety continued to grow in Washington—especially as the Israelis began to creep beyond the 40-kilometer line that Prime Minister Begin had announced as the goal of the operation. Ambassador Habib had arrived in Jerusalem and several crisis action and working groups had been established in the American capital to monitor the action. Around Washington the feeling seemed to be coalescing that Israel had apparently started this fight on its own, but the elimination of the PLO just might give this otherwise nasty little war some redeeming merit.

Nonetheless, diplomatic cables coming from the region were most disturbing. The Arab states were predictably outraged, a feeling magnified by their common fears that the Israelis might for the first time actually occupy an Arab capital—Beirut. From Jerusalem, the messages indicated that the initially limited Israeli objectives might be broadening somewhat. This raised disturbing possibilities and Washington cabled instructions to pressure Jerusalem to stick with its initial declaration of advancing only to the 40-kilometer line.

On the ground in Lebanon, Yaron, with Geva still in the lead, continued to move towards Damour (see Map 7). The road through Sidon was opened, but what was to become a 6-day siege at the Ein Hilwe refugee camp began.

MAP 7: Operations - 8 June 1982



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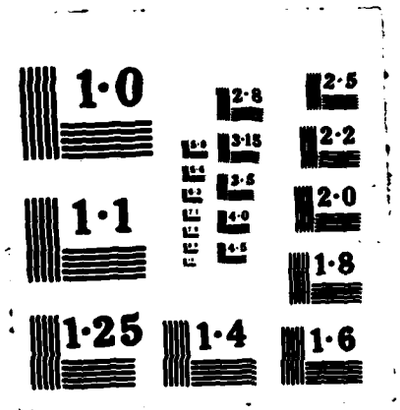
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In the air, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) had its first encounter with the Syrians over Beirut and southern Lebanon, downing six MiGs with no Israeli losses. Flying close air support missions on all three fronts, the IAF came within missile range of the Syrian batteries in the Bekaa Valley. Although they were tracked by radar, no Israeli aircraft were fired upon.

In the center, a tragedy occurred. As elements of Cohen's 460th Brigade moved from Jezzine to Masghara, they ran into a sister unit from the Vardi division approaching the town from the south. Mistaking each other for Syrian formations, the two units engaged in a pitched battle that lasted for nearly two hours before the mistake was discovered. By this time, however, there were a number of dead on both sides along with several damaged tanks.[12]

By nightfall, the Israelis were consolidating in the center, awaiting an opportunity to attack Masghara, while to the west of Lake Qaraoun the force led by Yossi Peled climbed the winding roads of the Jabaal Barouk in an effort to get into position to command the roads leading into the Bekaa from the west. In the east little occurred as the center remained both stationary and quiet while the flanking movement around Rachaiya continued. By the end of the day, Israelis and Syrians were only yards apart along certain portions of the front.[13] As the Israeli Cabinet met that evening, the only member aware that a clash with the Syrians was all but inevitable was Ariel Sharon, and as one observer has noted, his plan was to "hoodwink" his colleagues rather than enlighten them.[14]

9 JUNE 1982

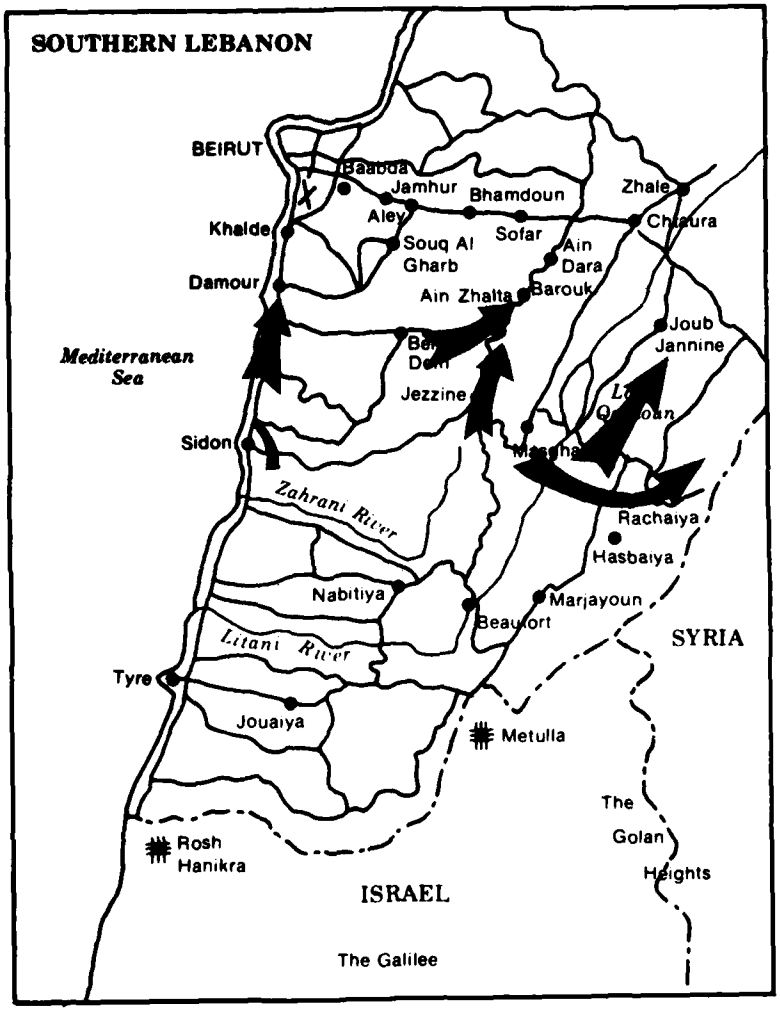
On the fourth day of the war, actions in both the military and diplomatic dimensions began to intensify. Ambassador Habib had arrived in Israel late on 7 June and had

begun talks immediately with the Begin government on achieving a cessation of hostilities. The Israelis, evidently buoyed by their military successes so far, were in no mood to yield. In addition, international pressures were not yet critical. Although the UN Security Council had passed Resolution 509 on 6 June, calling for Israel to withdraw and for all parties to observe the previous cease-fire agreement, the United States had vetoed a resolution on 8 June calling for sanctions against Jerusalem for continuing with the invasion.

Habib and others were increasingly concerned by the Israelis' hardening attitude. During the debate at the UN on 8 June, Israel's Ambassador Yehuda Blum had declared that Israel would stay in Lebanon until "concrete arrangements" could be established ending the hostilities directed against the Galilee from Lebanese soil. After seeing Begin on the afternoon of 8 June, Habib left for Syria, carrying a message to President Assad for Syria to avoid conflict with Israel and to have Syrian troops in Lebanon attempt to restrain the PLO from engaging in further combat.[15] Before Habib could deliver the message, Israel struck at the Syrian missile positions in the Bekaa destroying 17 of the 19 batteries deployed there by Damascus.

Before the great air battles of 9 June action elsewhere was limited (see Map 8). Along the coast, Geva continued to march towards Damour and the siege at the Ein Hilwe camp outside Sidon continued although Israel was finally in control of the Rachidiya camp near Tyre. In the center, Einan made contact with Peled's force still moving along the Jabaal Barouk, but was later ambushed by a determined Syrian force as he approached Ain Zhalta, suffering considerable losses in his armored personnel carriers (APCs) and tanks. The battle at Ain Zhalta lasted several hours and halted the IDF about 12 kilometers south of

MAP 8: Operations - 9 June 1982



the Beirut-Damascus highway. Meanwhile in the east, the situation intensified considerably.

Having won from the Cabinet authorization to attack the Syrian positions, Sharon launched a mammoth preemptive strike against the SAM missile batteries in the Bekaa. Using remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs) and decoys, the Israelis launched a 96-aircraft attack. When the Syrian Air Force entered the action, the Israelis shot down some 22 aircraft with no losses by the IAF. Taking advantage of their superior aircraft, pilot training, mastery of electronic warfare, and especially the new American AIM–9L Sidewinder missile, the Israelis decisively won control of the air. By midday on 10 June, the IAF had destroyed nearly 65 Syrian MiGs with no Israeli combat losses.

Taking advantage of this air superiority, Ben Gal launched an attack up the Bekaa Valley. Lev's division, in the center, mounted a major thrust towards Joub Jannine while Sakel passed through Rachaiya. Yossi Peled continued down the Jabaal Barouk providing the flank security to the west.

Because of this vigorous Israeli action, President Reagan sent a stiffly worded note to Prime Minister Begin calling for a cease-fire beginning at 6 a.m. on 10 June. Begin refused the request arguing that although he accepted the concept of a cease-fire, he could not comply unless President Assad agreed to remove both the Syrian and PLO forces from Lebanon. Later in the day, reports came from Jerusalem indicating that Begin and Foreign Minister Shamir were willing to accept the President's proposal, but that Sharon was adamantly opposed. At this time, the Israelis recommended that Secretary of State Haig come to the Middle East, but suggested that he not arrive until after midnight on 10 June—indicating that there were additional military objectives they hoped to secure before they announced plans to end the hostilities.

10 JUNE 1982

As the 10th began, Geva's force moved past Damour and began to close on Khalde, just south of Beirut. Syrian and PLO forces began to join together and the first clash between the Israelis and a joint Arab force occurred near Kafr Sill, in the Beirut suburbs (see Map 9).

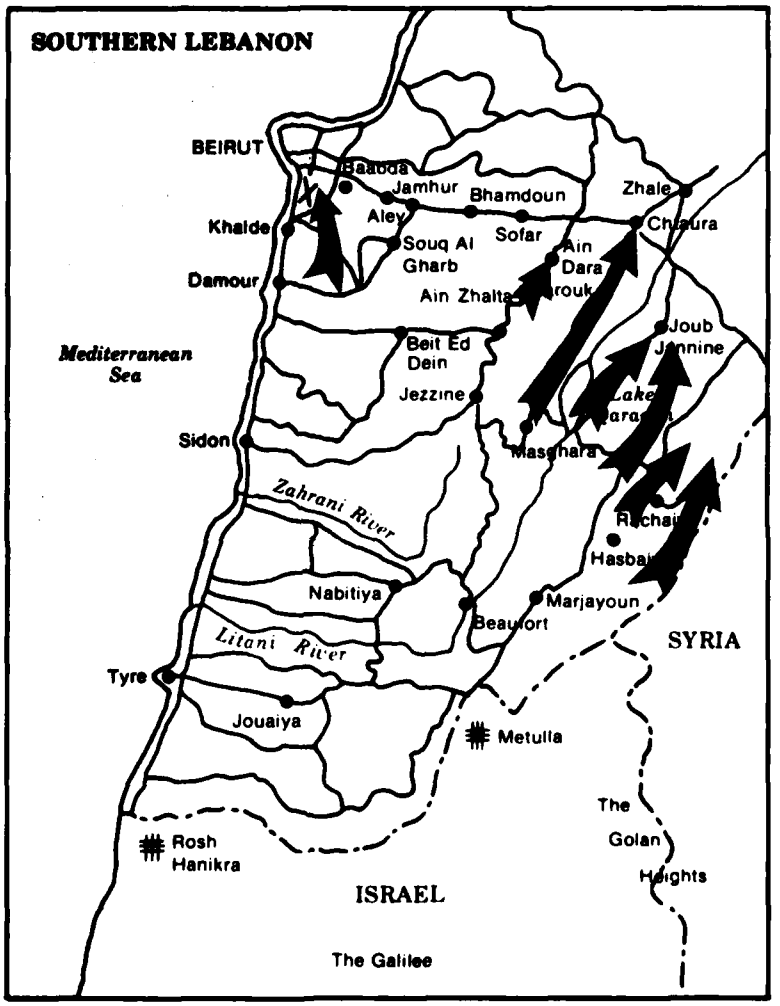
In the center, Ain Zhalta had fallen and the forces of Menachem Einan began to move towards Ain Dara, one step closer to the Beirut-Damascus highway, the vital tactical and logistical route for Syrian forces stationed in Lebanon. Along the valley floor, the advance towards Joub Jannine was both difficult and deadly.

The Syrians utilized the French Gazelle helicopter, armed with the HOT missile, to execute an orderly retreat up the valley. They had also organized their defenses well and successfully ambushed a battalion-sized Israeli column as it moved north of Joub Jannine in the direction of the tiny crossroads at Soultan Yaaquoub. It was six hours before the Israelis were able to bring forward enough combat power to cover the withdrawal of the trapped battalion. This action cost the Israelis about 30 killed and six to eight tanks. The ability of the Syrians to withdraw north in good order was winning them considerable respect from Israeli commanders.[16]

11–22 JUNE 1982

Yielding to American and international pressure, the Israelis and Syrians announced a cease-fire at noon on 11 June, but declared that it did not include the PLO. Just before the cease-fire took effect, however, there was a brief clash as the Syrians attempted to reinforce their units in the Bekaa with a T–72 tank unit. The Syrians ran into Peled's force which inflicted considerable damage, largely through the employment of antitank missiles.

MAP 9: Operations - 10 June 1982



Along the coast, Khalde had been captured and fighting intensified as the Israelis closed in on Beirut airport. The Israelis' Christian allies began to move down from the north, placing the PLO and Syrian forces in Beirut between two hostile forces which together controlled the escape route to the east. There were other clashes in the air in which the Syrians lost 18 more planes bringing their total combat aircraft losses to over 90 since the war began. The IAF had, by this time, lost one aircraft to ground fire.

On 12 June, the cease-fire was extended to the PLO, but the entire arrangement broke down by the morning of 13 June. As the Syrians tried to reinforce north of Khalde to get between the Israelis and Beirut, the 35th Brigade of Yarom moved out in the direction of Baabda, the site of the Lebanese Presidential Palace where negotiations were being conducted involving the government of Lebanon, the various Lebanese factions, and the United States. After some heavy fighting south of Baabda, lasting over fourteen hours, the Israelis captured the town and early the next morning crossed the highway in strength, completing the encirclement of Beirut and linking up with their Phalangist allies. Both sides now settled into positions from which they fought a series of small skirmishes and artillery duels lasting through 22 June. Along the center and eastern fronts, Israeli advances had also ground to a halt and the tempo of operations was greatly reduced.[17]

22–25 JUNE

The Israeli movement north of the Beirut-Damascus highway, effectively began the siege of Beirut that would drag into August. Prior to the last concentrated Israeli offensive of the war to clear the highway east of Baabda, action on the diplomatic and political front became feverish.

In Washington, the traditional American supporters of Israel, sensing a considerable degree of frustration within the US government over Jerusalem's actions, launched a major campaign to convince both the administration and Congress that there were great advantages in what Israel had accomplished in Lebanon. Right in their footsteps were members of the American-Lebanese community arguing that the invasion offered a chance for the creation of a strong new political order in Lebanon which would allow the central government to reassert control over the nation as a whole. Fundamentally, this was a shorthand argument for the perpetuation and consolidation of Christian power in Lebanese politics, considered by many to be the root cause of the country's political instability. The efforts of these two groups won some converts, and certainly calmed many others, but there remained throughout the US capital a great uneasiness, reflected in the cool reception Prime Minister Begin received when he came to visit President Reagan on 21 June. Begin's meeting with the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee was later described by Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas as the "angriest" he had seen in eight years in Congress.[18]

In Lebanon, the National Salvation Council, established by President Elias Sarkis on 14 June and consisting of the 7 major factional leaders, continued its efforts to create a national response to the invasion while laying the foundation for a restoration of order after the war. The progress was slow and ultimately futile. Throughout the rest of the region, Arab governments dispatched a steady stream of cables to Washington insisting, with increasing alarm, that the United States use its influence to restrain the Israeli advance. These comments were echoed by the American ambassadors who began to consider drawing down their embassy staffs out of concern that a major backlash directed at the United States was about to occur.

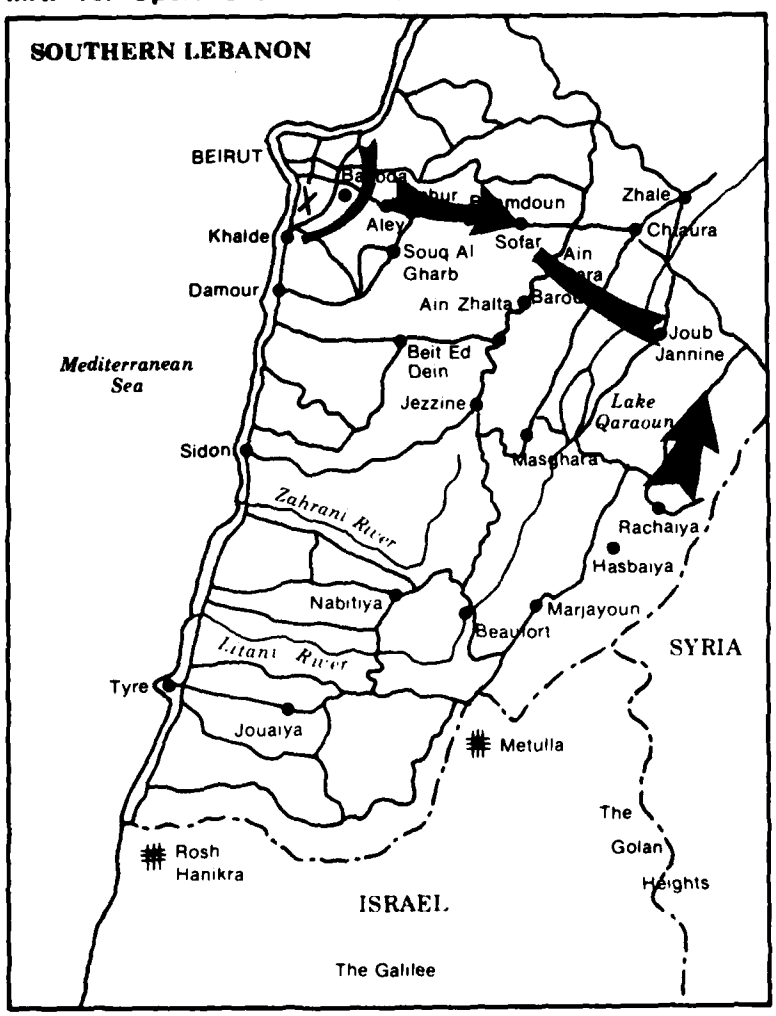
Saudi Arabia and Egypt were particularly persistent in efforts to force Washington's hand in controlling Israeli actions. In exchange for agreeing to receive Begin during his visit to Washington, President Reagan managed to secure on 16 June Israel's agreement not to enter Beirut, a major concern of the Arab states.

Although a new cease-fire had gone into effect on 21 June, coinciding with Begin's visit to Washington, the following day the Israelis launched a major attack eastward to clear the Beirut-Damascus highway (see Map 10). Their basic objective was to drive the Syrians back to Chtaura. preventing any attempts to counterattack and break the siege setting in around Beirut. Realizing that the loss of Chtaura would be a serious blow, the Syrians fought tenaciously, but the Israelis succeeded in gaining control of the highway as far east as Sofar from where they were able to control the approaches to Chtaura with artillery fire. After this situation stabilized, a cease-fire was declared on 25 June.

25 JUNE–12 AUGUST 1982

On 25 June it was announced that Secretary of State Alexander Haig would resign and be replaced by George Shultz. Although it is still not fully understood to what degree the war in Lebanon contributed to Haig's dismissal, the two are clearly related to some extent. At the same time, the Israelis launched a massive artillery and air attack on West Beirut, where Yasir Arafat and his surviving PLO fighters had ensconced themselves, declaring their intention to make the city into a modern-day "Stalingrad" if need be. This air attack, evidently unauthorized by the Israeli Cabinet, like the offensive to clear the Beirut-Damascus highway, initiated the decline in the authority of Defense Minister Sharon, culminating in his dismissal in early 1983.[19]

MAP 10: Operations - 22 - 25 June 1982



The siege of Beirut lasted until US Marines and the multinational force arrived to supervise the departure of the PLO from Beirut. During this period, both the Israelis and the PLO were largely acting with an eye on political considerations. Both wanted to avoid a bloody fight from street to street. During all of July, the Israelis tried numerous tactics to force the PLO to either surrender or evacuate. They bombed the city almost daily, inflicting casualties not only on the PLO but on hundreds of civilians, and drew artillery into close proximity, engaging in direct fire into the outskirts—a most abnormal artillery tactic. They turned off the water and power for several days, but finally restored it under considerable international pressure.

During the siege, Ambassador Habib continued with his efforts to negotiate a withdrawal of the PLO from the city. The United States felt compelled to take this particular approach as all of the Arab states in the region friendly to the West had strongly expressed the opinion that military destruction of the PLO by Israel would be an unacceptable conclusion to the war, leaving them vulnerable to potentially destabilizing domestic pressure.

The American government became increasingly uneasy with the daily media pictures emanating from the besieged city. After the heavy bombardment of 15 July, the United States formally suspended the delivery of cluster munitions to Jerusalem.[20] Under pressure from both the Arabs and its Western allies, the United States had offered, in early July, to provide troops to supervise the departure of the PLO from Beirut, an initiative welcomed by the French and Italians who agreed to join with Washington in such a venture. Habib continued his efforts all through July to negotiate such an agreement while maintaining a cease-fire between the belligerents. One cease-fire after another was declared and then broken—as

often as not by the Israelis, according to sources on the scene.

This was because Jerusalem was under growing pressure to conclude the war and demonstrate some benefit from it. The early rapid advances had now been replaced by a lengthy siege during which the Israelis began to suffer much more than they had during the initial four-day dash up the coast.[21] Increasingly desperate to force the capitulation of Arafat and the Syrians in West Beirut, Sharon sent the IAF against the enemy positions in the city. A heavy assault on 4 August drew a strong message from President Reagan to Begin, which the prime minister defiantly rejected. Five days later, Habib presented a detailed plan to the Israelis for the withdrawal of the PLO from West Beirut under the protection of the Multinational Force which would include American Marines. The Israelis accepted the plan "in principle," but objected to the PLO being withdrawn under the protection of an external organization, particularly one that included the United States.

On 11 and 12 August, Sharon, without Cabinet approval, made one last concentrated effort to get the PLO out of Beirut through the application of Israeli power rather than American diplomacy. In the most intensive air onslaught of the war, the IAF attacked the PLO camps and the high-rise buildings in the center of the city used by the PLO as headquarters and control centers. President Reagan sent Begin a very blunt message following this action, demanding that the Israelis end their attacks and honor the last established cease-fire. Shortly afterwards, Begin accepted the President's demands. In addition, the Israeli Cabinet finally rescinded the authority of Sharon to conduct the war.[22]

On 21 August, 350 French paratroopers landed in Beirut, beginning the withdrawal of the PLO by ship to

Cyprus and ultimately to Tunisia, Yemen, Jordan, and Syria. On 25 August, the American Marines arrived to join the French in supervising the execution of the evacuation plan negotiated by Ambassador Habib and accepted by Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. Arafat embarked on 30 August and sailed to Athens where he received a hero's welcome from Greek Premier Andreas Papandreou; two weeks later he was received in Rome by Pope John Paul II. On 11 September, the Multinational Force withdrew, effectively ending the conflict.

On 23 August 1982, before the final withdrawal of Syrian and PLO forces, the goal that the Israelis and many in the Lebanese Christian community had sought was seemingly accomplished: Bashir Gemayel, the leader of the Phalangist Military Force nurtured by Israel since the 1975 Civil War, was elected President of Lebanon. But, like all of the gains Israel had hoped to secure in Lebanon, this one also proved to be only transitory.

On 8 September, Bashir came to Nahariya to meet with Begin and Sharon. Under heavy pressure to secure something concrete to justify the war, the Israeli leaders pressured Bashir to sign a peace treaty with Israel as soon as he took office. Bashir refused, arguing that to do so would be unacceptable to his Muslim compatriots and would isolate Lebanon from Arab allies, such as Saudi Arabia, desperately needed for reconstruction following the war. The disagreement became intense, perhaps symbolizing a parting of the ways of the Israelis and the Maronites after a long period of shared interests. The full impact of the meeting will never be fully known, for six days later Bashir was assassinated and replaced as President by his less forceful and less pro-Israeli brother, Amin.[23]

Israeli leaders perhaps had hoped for the establishment in Lebanon of a "New Order" that would be predisposed towards signing a peace agreement with Jerusalem, but that hope has never been realized, even though the May 1983 agreement, engineered by Secretary of State George Shultz, certainly brought the dream tantalizingly close.

Following Bashir's murder, the Israelis entered Beirut against strong American opposition. Brigadier General Amos Yaron's soldiers surrounded the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatilla but did not enter them. Major General Drori asked the Lebanese regular army to take control of the camps, but they refused. Perhaps under pressure to show that the Phalangists were valuable allies, although they had so far contributed little to the war effort around Beirut, and still concerned about the casualties bound to be suffered by the IDF in an urban battle, Sharon approved using the Phalangists to clear the camps. During the operation conducted between 16 and 18 September, over 300 Palestinians resident in the camps were murdered.

In Israel, an avalanche of public fury forced Prime Minister Begin into appointing an investigative commission whose report, released on 8 February 1983, was devastating. It found the prime minister innocent of any direct involvement, but implicated him nonetheless for that very reason. The picture of Begin was one indicating a lack of interest and lack of control over his key subordinates. Sharon, who had approved the operation, and his Chief of Staff General Eitan who had supervised it, were both excoriated. Eitan was judged derelict in his duty, and Sharon was charged with indirect responsibility with the thinly veiled recommendation that he be removed as Defense Minister. The Chief of Military Intelligence (who had long doubted the wisdom of counting on the Phalangists as allies) and the Generals Drori and Yaron were also severely

reprimanded.[24] This began the deterioration of the Begin government, leading to Sharon's forced departure as Defense Minister three days after the release of the report, and Begin's resignation in September.

As the siege of Beirut wore on and it became increasingly obvious that the PLO was not going to be destroyed, the continued hostilities steadily eroded support within Israel and within the armed forces. As early as 28 June, soldiers returning from the front began to protest the invasion in front of Begin's offices in Jerusalem. Following the massacre at the Sabra and Shatilla camps, over 400,000 Israelis turned out in the streets of Tel Aviv—almost 10 percent of the total population—demanding an investigation and an end to the war.[25] But the signs of discontent within the senior levels of the Army were even more disturbing.

Before the siege of Beirut ended, Israel was shaken by the resignation of Colonel Eli Geva, the commander who had led the 211th Brigade on the dash up the coast to Beirut. Upset about the possibility of an assault on Beirut, and feeling the war had gone beyond reasonable bounds, Geva asked to be relieved of his command. After a personal meeting with Begin and Eitan, he was removed and dismissed from the IDF.[26] Following a speech to the Israeli Command and Staff College in August 1982, during which he defended the war as unavoidable, Begin also received the resignation of Major General Amram Mitzna, the director of the college. Israelis were again taken aback by criticism of the war voiced by Lieutenant General Avraham Burg, the son of Rabbi Josef Burg, the leader of the National Religious Party and a member of the Begin Cabinet.[27] Additionally, numerous petitions originating within the army began to circulate, expressing opposition to the invasion and demanding the resignation of Sharon.

A crisis of confidence was clearly building in Israel directly attributable to the campaign in Lebanon.

The PLO was also shaken, and throughout the rest of 1982 and into 1983, its internal struggle continued as Arafat attempted to retain control in the face of a Syrian sponsored rebellion. Arafat had lost considerable influence as a result of the invasion, but he successfully marketed his defiant stand in Beirut, during which he had withstood Israeli arms longer than any Arab leader in history, parlaying this into some minimal political capital. The challenge to Arafat was based less on his military "success" than on his continued belief that armed action against Israel was futile. This revolt against the Chairman and his preferences for a political solution clearly illustrated that the elimination of his wing of the PLO would not result in its replacement by moderate forces willing to settle with Israel. The alternative to Arafat has always been radical rather than moderate elements within the Palestinian movement. By November 1984, it appeared clear that the worst had passed and that Arafat, whose chairmanship was renewed by the Palestine National Council, had somewhat consolidated his position within the PLO. By early 1985, he was once again talking with King Hussein about the possible parameters of a solution; clearly, both he and the PLO were still players in the game.[28]

In February 1985, still dealing with considerable numbers of troops in Lebanon, and still taking casualties from insurgents (now generally agreed to be Shiite rather than Palestinian), the Israeli government of Prime Minister Shimon Peres, a longtime political opponent of Begin, announced a unilateral withdrawal.

ENDNOTES

1. Amos Perlmutter, "Begin's Rhetoric and Sharon's Tactics," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, no. 1, (Fall 1982), p. 68.

2. Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israel-PLO War in Lebanon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 61.

3. See Gabriel, pp. 62–63; also see Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter, *Fire In Beirut* (New York: Stein and Day Publishing, 1984), pp. 98–99.

4. Bavly, pp. 164–165.

5. Gabriel, p. 64.

6. Gabriel, p. 81.

7. Gabriel, pp. 65–66 and pp. 82–84; and Bavly p. 85.

8. Bavly, p. 214. The observations on the intentions of Sharon come from State Department officials.

9. See Nick J. Rahall II, "Lebanon and US Foreign Policy Toward The Middle East," *Arab-American Affairs*, No. 2, (Fall 1982), p. 45.

10. Gabriel, p. 92.

11. Bavly, p. 85.

12. Gabriel, p. 94.

13. Gabriel, p. 95.

14. Perlmutter, p. 74.

15. See "Chronology," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, no. 3, p. 727.

16. Gabriel, pp. 104–105.

17. Gabriel, p. 108.

18. These observations on the actions, feelings, and attitudes around Washington are drawn from my personal observations during the period concerned.

19. Bavly, p. 98.

20. Bavly, p. 107.

21. Gabriel, p. 182.
22. Gabriel, pp. 156–158; and Bavly, pp. 100–109.
23. Bavly, p. 192.
24. Bavly, pp. 152–161; and Gabriel, pp. 218–221.
25. Gabriel, p. 186.
26. Gabriel, p. 184; and Bavly, p. 168.
27. Gabriel, p. 185; and Bavly, p. 165.
28. Edward Walsh, "TV Coverage of Amman PLO Session Lifts Spirits in West Bank," *The Washington Post*, 28 November 1984, p. A26.

V. THE RELEVANCE OF CLAUSEWITZ

Now the first, the greatest and the most decisive act of judgment which a statesman and commander performs is that of correctly recognizing in this respect the kind of war he is undertaking, of not taking it for, or wishing to make it, something which by the nature of the circumstances it cannot be.[1]

Karl von Clausewitz

Clausewitz has taught us that war and politics are inseparably connected, that the former is a continuation of the latter through the application of other means. War has always been undertaken to achieve certain political goals, and as the earlier discussion of conflict in the contemporary setting indicated, this is increasingly the case in the modern era. Because nations today rarely have the power to completely destroy their opponents, the use of the military instrument must be directed towards the achievement of clearly defined political goals—goals which are unambiguously reducible to military means. This is tricky calculus at best; but when it is not made with an ample injection of intellectual rigor and objectivity, when the ends and means are clearly out of balance or proportion, the inevitable result must be disaster.

For Israel, the 1982 decision to invade Lebanon, to undertake a war that it did not need to fight, tragically illustrates the pitfalls present when the necessary analysis is not performed, when emotion and ideological zeal are allowed to supplant good judgment. The indications of this basic failure on the part of Jerusalem are to be found in several places.

LACK OF CLEARLY DEFINED POLITICAL GOALS

It is not fully clear to this day the precise nature of the political goals that Israel had in mind when it launched the attack. The possibilities span the spectrum from those which were very narrow and easily achievable, to those which were very broad and simply beyond the reach of Israeli military power. They include:

Establish a *Cordon Sanitaire:* The very first claim by Prime Minister Begin after his troops crossed the border was that Israel was seeking to establish a zone 40 kilometers deep that would put the settlements of the Galilee beyond the reach of PLO artillery. Indeed, Begin added that Israel had no other interest in Lebanon and did not covet any Lebanese territory, a claim he repeated when he visited Washington in mid-June.

This goal was clearly within the capability of the IDF to achieve and it had, in fact, met this objective within the first four days of the war. Although the IDF never did capture large numbers of PLO fighters, prompting many observers to declare the war a failure from the start in crippling PLO military power, it did uncover large stores of PLO military equipment.[2] This, along with some provision to establish a buffer in southern Lebanon expanding the Hadad enclave created after "Operation Litani" in 1978, would have largely achieved the objective of removing the Galilee from potential artillery harassment. Since Jerusalem did not end the war at this point, however, it evidently had other goals that were unsatisfied.

Control the Camp David Agenda: Prime Minister Begin, Defense Minister Sharon, and Foreign Minister Shamir shared one goal: they were all dedicated to the retention of the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli control.

This had been a central theme throughout Begin's political life and he had elevated its importance immediately after assuming office as Prime Minister in 1977. Sharon, who had strongly advanced the settlements program during his tenure as Agricultural Minister, had a stake in seeing his program both secured and expanded. He had boasted to some senior American visitors of expanding the Israeli population to 4.2 million by the turn of the century with 2 million Jews residing on the West Bank. For his part, Shamir had opposed the Camp David Agreement because of its provisions for Palestinian Autonomy.

Although Begin had successfully thwarted any progress on the Palestinian portion of Camp David through the end of President Carter's term, and the Reagan administration seemed to have little interest initially, the appointment of Richard Fairbanks as the President's new Special Negotiator in February 1982, and the appearance of his negotiating team in the Middle East later in the spring, indicated a new seriousness of purpose in Washington. Begin and his Cabinet delayed the talks for a while by raising the venue issue, but Washington continued to propose ways to settle this problem. An attack against Lebanon would remove the West Bank from the diplomatic agenda and offer the associated benefit of calming the rioting in the area by discouraging the local supporters of the PLO, while encouraging those Palestinian Arabs willing to settle for Begin's narrowly defined version of autonomy.

If this were the Cabinet's objective, it achieved some success. There have been no Palestinian Autonomy Negotiations since the invasion, and the State Department team which was handling the negotiations was broken up after the war with several of its personnel being assigned to the crew conducting the withdrawal negotiations in Lebanon.

Some argue, along these lines, that the invasion was an effort to execute "the Sharon Plan"—driving the PLO

out of Lebanon and back into Jordan where it would gain some control of the government and eventually accept Jordan as "the" Palestinian state. Indeed, during a trip to the United States in late August, after the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut, Sharon raised the issue of Jordan as the Palestinian state several times, finally prompting the State Department to issue a statement reiterating Washington's commitment to Jordan's political and territorial integrity. If Sharon intended to encourage Palestinians to return to the East Bank, he was clearly unsuccessful as King Hussein was reluctant to accept the PLO unconditionally. In addition, the Palestinians have never indicated that they considered Jordan to be a substitute for Palestine—even when they were a major force in the country before their clash with the king in 1970.

Establish a "New Order" in Lebanon: Some suggest that the invasion was an effort by Israel to firmly establish the Phalange Party, or perhaps another Lebanese group sympathetic to Israel, in power in Beirut. This would allow Israel to sign a peace treaty with Lebanon and establish diplomatic relations. Continuing the process that began with Egypt after Camp David, this would give Israel *normal relations* with two of its neighboring Arab states and would hopefully allow it to assist in the establishment of order in southern Lebanon. Since any Christian government would require continual Israeli assistance, a prolonged Israeli presence in southern Lebanon would be required, giving Israel legal standing to remain there. Unfortunately, this plan did not allow for the establishment of the necessary "new equilibrium" in Lebanese politics, an essential prerequisite for bringing the contending factions into the Lebanese political process.[3]

Eliminate the PLO: The most expansive goal that Israel might have been pursuing was the destruction of the PLO. Most observers, including Amos Perlmutter and Hal

Saunders, agree that this was the main stimulus for the invasion. Jerusalem had been arguing for some time that the PLO was building in southern Lebanon a large conventional army and was preparing to make the switch from guerrilla to conventional arms in its confrontation with Israel. It was a compelling argument, but one without much merit. The arms that the PLO had were technologically far from the latest and PLO forces were never trained or organized for conventional warfare. The early stages of the war quickly revealed this. The PLO fighters fought numerous small unit and individual actions, then quickly dropped their weapons and headed down the road or simply melted into the local population.

Arafat was building up his arms supplies, and he was trying to establish something that looked like a regular force in southern Lebanon, but sources close to the PLO have indicated that this was not being done because he had any illusions of challenging Israel militarily. Evidently, Arafat hoped to use the arms, and his control of them, to gain some increased authority over the various factions operating throughout the country. Regardless of what he had in southern Lebanon in the way of military equipment, he did not have an air force, except for a few hot air balloons and hang gliders,—and these could hardly have presented Israel with a serious challenge.

It seems quite plausible that the main purpose of the Israeli invasion was to destroy the PLO infrastructure and, by so doing, to eliminate the viability of the PLO as a negotiating adversary in the competition for the West Bank and Gaza. Simultaneously, the elimination of the PLO would halt the growing diplomatic strength of the Palestinian movement whose gains were primarily being made at Israel's expense.

Several possible goals present themselves in addition to the ones detailed. For example, Israel may have wanted

to gain control of the water resources provided by the Litani River.[4] But the actual purpose that the invasion sought to achieve is not known. Clearly it was not simply to prevent artillery attacks on the Galilee as the incident that caused the war occurred in London. As previously mentioned, General Eitan clearly had no intention of halting after 40 kilometers, and in the sixth week of the war was quoted as telling a group of soldiers that they were fighting for "Eretz Israel" ("homeland of Israel"), not to resolve the problems of "Lebanon and Galilee."[5] On the other hand, Colonel Geva obviously had no intention of attacking the PLO and fighting to the death inside Beirut. If the Cabinet ever had specific political goals in mind, they were never neatly reduced to achievable military objectives. Considering the effort invested against the PLO in West Beirut, it seems clear that—whether the Cabinet ever realized it or not—the military objective of Ariel Sharon before 12 August was the destruction of the PLO. In addition to failing to establish a clear political goal, the Israelis also violated a Clausewitzian precept on the use of military force.

FAILURE TO FOCUS ON THE CENTER OF GRAVITY

Clausewitz argues that, in war, a certain center of gravity forms on which all else depends, and against this center a concentrated blow must be directed. In its attack on the PLO, Israel assumed that the military component of the PLO was its center of gravity and that if this was destroyed, the PLO would lose its vitality as an organization. Yet the military component has never been the source of PLO strength.

The PLO is primarily a political organism which, on occasion, uses terror as one of its tools. This is a far cry from a military power that can be eliminated. The Israelis

found in their advance along the coastal road that the PLO did not fight as a unit and, when it did, it did not fight well.[6] That was simply because the military organization was little more than a reflection of the PLO leadership's desire to retain the instruments of confrontation along with a structure for controlling its diverse elements. Three former Israeli Chiefs of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin, Mordecai Gur, and Haim Bar-Lev, had testified before the Knesset that the Palestinian problem could not be solved by conventional military means. The former Chief of Military Intelligence, Major General Shlomo Gazit, had stated earlier that as a terrorist organization and a political phenomenon the PLO could be controlled, but not destroyed; it could only be dealt with effectively through a political solution.[7]

The truth is simply this: the PLO does not have a military center of gravity. It must be confronted primarily with political action. If one attempts to confront it directly with brute military power, it receives attention and an aura of strength that the real PLO simply does not merit. This, in turn, tends to add to its attractiveness among Palestinian youth, many of whom already admire the PLO "heroes and heroines" who have taken a stand against the tanks and planes of Israel.[8]

The Israeli Army was simply not suited for the role it was given in Lebanon. It was not organized for fighting in mountainous terrain, nor was it prepared to do battle in urban areas. The force deployed in Lebanon reflected the history of the IDF. It was heavily equipped with tanks and insufficiently augmented with supporting infantry. Accordingly, it suffered heavy casualties as it was forced to abandon the open terrain of the Sinai and the Golan for the restrictive turf of Lebanon. Even if destroying the military strength of the PLO could have been politically decisive, it is doubtful that the force Sharon deployed in Lebanon could have achieved the PLO's destruction. In Vietnam,

the United States elected not to use power it possessed; in Lebanon, Israel elected to use power it did not possess. In both cases, the failure to carefully calculate the military strength required to achieve a political objective proved the key to disaster. In the terms of Clausewitz, Israeli policy had promised itself "a wrong effect from certain military means and measures."

FAILURE TO MERGE WAR AND POLITICS IN THE ISRAELI CABINET

Clausewitz has several salient observations about governments and cabinets. First, he notes that "The influence in the Cabinet of any military man except the commander-in-chief is extremely dangerous." He also suggests that, "the Minister of War should not be a soldier, but a statesman who knows just enough about war not to expect results from military means and measures which they cannot produce."[9] During its brief history, Israel has been well served by former military leaders who rose to prominence after completion of their armed service careers. Three of Israel's most celebrated military leaders, Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizman, and Yitzhak Rabin, have served with distinction when given the Defense portfolio. Ariel Sharon's performance as Defense Minister, on the other hand, indicated that the reservations of Clausewitz could have validity.

The Israeli Cabinet system, as previously discussed, does not allow for controversial initiatives that go beyond the consensus of the ruling coalition. In the case of the first Begin government, there were enough representatives of groups who did not share the Prime Minister's ideological purity to allow some latitude for political compromise. As President Carter has pointed out in his memoirs of the Camp David Agreement, Begin's advisers, particularly Foreign Minister Dayan (A former minister in the Labor

Government of Golda Meir) and Defense Minister Weizman, encouraged Begin to compromise and accept a reasonable degree of risk in the quest for peace. In addition, both were former generals and capable of checking excessive claims on the needs of Israeli security suggested by the third Cabinet general, Ariel Sharon.

With the departure of Dayan and Weizman the second Begin Cabinet contained only those personalities who shared Begin's basic beliefs and were quite willing to accept Sharon's assertions about the needs of national security. Sharon was the only former general then serving at the highest level of the Israeli government, and he successfully argued that a military attack into Lebanon would destroy the PLO and with it the Palestinian problem that was causing so much difficulty on the West Bank and abroad. In addition, he believed that the destruction of the PLO would create conditions for the establishment of a new political order in Lebanon led by the Maronite groups, particularly the Phalangists, who were closely allied, through mutual interests, with Israel. This, in turn, would lead to a treaty with Lebanon much like the one with Egypt or, at the very least, similar to the tacit agreement that Israel had had with the Shah of Iran prior to his overthrow in 1979. Additionally, a war with Syria and the destruction of its armed force would discredit Soviet military arms, strain the Soviet-Syrian relationship during a period when Moscow was concerned about Brezhnev's health and the unrest in Poland, and cement the dormant "strategic consensus" that he had negotiated with the United States in November 1981.

Unfortunately, Sharon's concept put the cart before the horse. It was a military scheme that promised itself political results, rather than a political strategy incorporating the use of military power. That Sharon, at the time he launched the invasion, evidently never confided to the

Cabinet his grand scheme for Lebanon strongly suggests that a political goal was never established.

In meeting with Peres and the Labor opposition on the day the invasion was launched, Begin gave assurances that the IDF would not advance past the 40-kilometer line and that a clash with the Syrians would be avoided at all costs. With these as the agreed limits, the Labor leaders gave their support to the war.[10] There is little evidence that the Israeli government had control over what was happening on the battlefield or that it seriously considered the consequences of attacking the Syrians and forcing the PLO to defend Beirut. The evidence does, however, suggest that Ariel Sharon fought the war in his own way until the ramifications became so painfully clear that the Cabinet asserted itself and withdrew his authority.[11] In effect, there occurred in Israel in 1982 a divergence of political will from military means which separated the war in Lebanon from the expected political dialogue. This created, as Clausewitz would have predicted, "a senseless thing without an object."

THE RESULT

The war in Lebanon produced few of the results expected by those who orchestrated it, but yielded several results that they could hardly have anticipated or desired. First, the PLO was displaced, weakened, and shaken, but hardly destroyed. It still exists, five years later, as recently demonstrated by the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in April 1987. It is still led by Yasir Arafat, although there have been certain changes at the lower levels along with some constraints on his power. The PLO continues to work with the moderate Arab states, including Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—three close allies of the United States in the Middle East. There was considerable controversy and violence within the organization after the war, and its radical elements attacked the

moderates. The most publicized incident was the murder in April 1983 of Dr. Issam Sartawi, who had advocated the recognition of Israel. The radical attempt to gain control of the organization ultimately failed, but not before it had ended Arafat's efforts to reach an agreement with King Hussein on a united response to the Reagan Peace Initiative of 1 September 1982.[12]

Second, Washington and Jerusalem experienced strained relations which lasted until the resignation of Prime Minister Begin and only started to mend after Labor Leader Shimon Peres became Prime Minister. The "strategic consensus" so coveted by Sharon was placed in cold storage and is only now being discussed again. The Reagan Peace Initiative calls for an end to the construction of new Israeli settlements and the establishment of a Palestinian entity on the West Bank in confederation with Jordan, suggestions clearly at odds with the preferences of the Begin government. In the wake of the invasion there grew the suspicion in the United States, as former UN Ambassador Donald McHenry stated, that Israeli actions often "tend to work against the interests of the United States."[13]

Third, the invasion put the hard won Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in jeopardy. Although Egypt has retained diplomatic relations with Israel, President Mubarak withdrew his ambassador from Jerusalem and the ambassadorial absence lasted for nearly four years. As one Egyptian diplomat stated, the relationship between the two countries is one of "cold peace."

Fourth, the chaos in Lebanon has been intensified and perpetuated. The invasion did nothing to address the problems of the country caused by its political power imbalance. The terrorism of the PLO splinter groups has now been replaced by the terrorism of Lebanese splinter groups, including the Shiite and other minorities. Since the invasion, the United States Embassy in Beirut has been

bombed twice, with considerable loss of life, and the barracks of the American Marine contingent of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force was destroyed, killing nearly 250 Marines. Israeli forces remaining in Lebanon have been attacked. Their casualties have reached a total of over 600 killed.

Fifth, although the initial deployment of Marines to Beirut to supervise the PLO withdrawal had merit, their second deployment in the wake of the Sabra and Shatilla incident and their continued stay, even after the local political condition had clearly changed, appeared to have brought the United States into the conflict on the side of the Lebanese Maronite establishment and, by extension the Israelis. This resulted in the eventual withdrawal of the Marines under very controversial circumstances.

Sixth, the Soviet resupply of the massive Syrian equipment losses, and the decision to man the newly deployed SAM–5 sites with 8,000 Soviet personnel, strengthened the dependency of Damascus on Moscow while increasing the Soviet presence in the area. Initially, the poor Syrian performance placed strains on the close alliance between the two states which had been formally established in 1980. But in the end, the Soviets responded by emplacing and manning the new air defense network in Syria and replacing in full the material losses suffered by Damascus during the conflict. As the current Israeli Defense Minister has noted, "I'm not saying the Soviets would not have given the Syrians these weapons anyway, but I believe it would have taken them an additional five or ten years."[14]

Finally, the costs for Israel have been high in many ways. The IDF was forced to occupy southern Lebanon for nearly three years, increasingly becoming the target of the new Lebanese terrorist groups. As Yitzhak Rabin noted,

> they received us in the beginning as liberators. But in the last year and a half, they have looked at us the way they looked at the PLO, as a foreign occupation force.[15]

The war cost Israel financially, adding to an already difficult economic situation, one which has effectively made it "a ward of the United States" in the words of one authority. The conflict that arose among the society, the government, and the armed forces has raised numerous issues that will be discussed for years. But perhaps most significantly, during the war Israel squandered its armed forces in an unsuccessful effort to destroy the PLO.

Many have suggested that during its war against the PLO in 1982, Israel was close to effecting major changes in the Middle East when ill-timed political pressures from the United States forfeited its hard won gains. Any objective analysis of the war in Lebanon indicates that this thesis of great opportunity lost is difficult to substantiate. Because of its complete failure to "correctly recognize" the nature of the war it was undertaking, Israel placed itself in a situation where it had little to gain and much to lose.

The evidence is clear that the government of Menachem Begin violated the most important lesson of Clausewitz in not establishing the essential link between war and politics. The Israeli Defense Force easily overran southern Lebanon, seizing one military objective after another—a task for which it was well designed and capable. But a strategy which tied the military objectives into a coherent political goal was completely absent. Lacking guidance on its actual mission, the IDF stumbled deeper into Lebanon until it finally encountered a military objective it could not secure—Beirut. When this occurred, the poverty of Ariel Sharon's military adventure became painfully apparent. Because of this fundamental failure, Israel's separation of war from politics, Lebanon and Israel were

condemned to suffer the consequences of "a senseless thing without an object."

The costs for Lebanon were visible. Thousands were killed and wounded, considerable property was destroyed and damaged, and the political turmoil which had plagued the country was greatly exacerbated. The Israeli losses, though equally serious, were less evident. Israel's internal cohesion was fractured, its international reputation was tarnished, and its national security situation was complicated. In its efforts to destroy the PLO and change the politics of Lebanon, Israel had unwisely squandered its armed forces. When the fighting was over, one expert noted:

> an Israel deeply disillusioned by the outcome of the 1982 war and the casualties from it, and under heavy economic strains, was simply a lot less powerful, or at least less willing to use its power, than it had seemed up to 1982.[16]

This outcome was one that Karl von Clausewitz would have understood—and predicted.

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2. Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation Peace For Galilee: The Israel-PLO War in Lebanon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 116.

3. See Ghassan Tueni, "Lebanon: A New Republic," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, no. 1, pp. 84–99; also Amos Perlmutter, "Begin's Rhetoric and Sharon's Tactics," p. 77, same issue.

4. See Thomas R. Stauffer, "The Price of Peace: The Spoils of War," *American-Arab Affairs*, No. 1, Summer 1982, pp. 43–54.

5. Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter, *Fire in Beirut* (New York: Stein and Day Publishing, 1984), p. 165; also see Jacobo Timerman, *The Longest War: Israel in Lebanon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1982), p. 75.

6. Gabriel, pp. 73–74.

7. Bavly, p. 80; Timerman, p. 7.

8. See the comments about the PLO position in the occupied territories in Rafik Halabi, *The West Bank Story* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1981), pp. 272–278.

9. See Clausewitz, p. 600, and p. xxvii.

10. Gabriel, p. 67.

11. Bavly, p. 98.

12. See the text of President Reagan's speech contained in Department of State, "A New Opportunity for Peace In the Middle East," *Current Policy*, No. 417, 1 September 1982.

13. See "An Interview With Donald F. McHenry," *Arab-American Affairs*, No. 2, Fall 1982, p. 21.

14. "An Interview With Yitzhak Rabin," *Time*, 11 February 1985, p. 44.

15. Ibid.

16. William P. Bundy, "A Portentous Year," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62, no. 3, p. 509.

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Interviews with Professor Nadav Safran, Professor of Government, Harvard University. Professor Safran is a native of Cairo whose family fled to Palestine in 1946. He fought with the Israelis in the 1948 war. He has written numerous books

on the Middle East focusing on Israel and analyzing the roots of the continual cycle of warfare.

Interviews with State Department officials. Four State Department officials were interviewed. All desired to remain anonymous. Two occupy senior policymaking positions; the other two are lower ranking officers who work at the Assistant Secretary level. The interviews were conducted in the fall of 1984.

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INDEX

THE AUTHOR

Major M. Thomas Davis grew up in the Middle East, spending six years in Saudi Arabia and five in Libya. On graduating from West Point in 1972, he was commissioned a lieutenant of artillery and served his first tour in Europe. Selected for graduate schooling, he earned a Master's degree from Harvard University in Middle Eastern Studies and was subsequently assigned to the faculty at the United States Military Academy where he taught Economics, International Relations, and Middle Eastern Politics and Government. In the summer of 1982, Major Davis was assigned to the staff of Ambassador Richard Fairbanks and worked in the State Department with the Palestinian Autonomy Talks negotiating team. Major Davis has served with the US Forces in Korea and on the Staff of the US Army Field Artillery School. He is a graduate of both the Army and Marine Corps Command and Staff Colleges. After being Fire Support Analyst for the Army Chief of Staff, Major Davis is presently Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Army.

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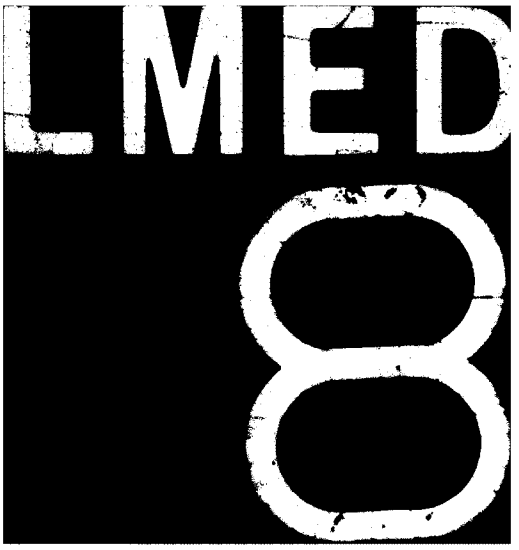
Yvette Hemphill, *Office Assistant*
Rhonda Hawkins, *Office Assistant*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8