LEARNING TO LEVERAGE NEW MEDIA
The Israeli Defense Forces in Recent Conflicts

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THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA environment continues to change at an ever-accelerating pace, faster than most could have imagined just 10 years ago. This acceleration has significant implications for today's media outlets and the military. New media is a case in point. It has been described as a "combustible mix of 24/7 cable news, call-in radio and television programs, Internet bloggers and online websites, cell phones and iPods."[1] New media's meteoric rise and increasing pervasiveness dictate fresh terms for the culture of media engagement.

With easy access, enormous reach, and breadth, this upstart has flexed sufficient muscle during recent conflicts to alter or transform our traditional view of information and its impact on populations and military operations. Simple to use, new media leapfrogs ordinary rules and conventions. At the same time, its very user-friendliness encourages unconventional adversaries to manipulate a growing number of related technologies to generate favorable publicity and recruit supporters. For these reasons and more, civilian and military leaders can ill-afford to ignore it. Perhaps more importantly, they must not fail to understand and use the new form of information dissemination, as it possesses serious implications for military operations.

Focusing on the current litany of new media capabilities can inhibit understanding because present developments may fail to account for anticipated technological advances. A more enduring description of new media would recognize its embrace of any emergent technological capability. Such emergent capabilities can empower a broad range of actors—individuals through nation-states—to create and spread timely information that can unify a vast audience via global standardized communications (e.g., the salience of the Internet). Impact and urgency assume such a sufficiently high profile that the currently "new" media might better be referred to as the "now" media. At the same time, there is an overarching dynamism that springs from the exponential increases in capability that seem to occur weekly.[2] Indeed, a key enabler for new media is "digital multimodality": content produced in one form can be easily and rapidly edited and repackaged, then transmitted in real time across many different forms of media.

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The potential for engagement is staggering—with the ability of new media to mimic comparable—albeit much slower—developments in the television industry. Thirty years ago, cable television was in its infancy, with three networks ruling the airwaves. Today, cable channels offer multitudes of options, and scores of satellite channels vie for viewers, fragmenting the broadcast audience. Similarly, over the last decade, the rise of the Internet and easy-to-use technology has fueled an explosion of the blogosphere. By August 2008, some 184 million blogs had proliferated worldwide, according to a *Technorati* report.[3] Three of the top five most visited sites in the United States were social networking or video sharing sites, including Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube.[4] According to The State of the News Media 2009 report from the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, the 50 most popular news sites registered a 27 percent increase in traffic over 2008.[5]

Proliferation and accessibility have played havoc with old rules of the media game in at least two important areas, gatekeeping and agenda-setting. Before the widespread advent of the new media, traditional editors and producers served as "gate-keepers," determining what stories and features to publish in accordance with varied criteria. In effect, key individuals and organizations controlled access to information.[6] Their decisions consciously or unconsciously set the agenda for coverage of news stories. Some issues received attention over others, and the media told the public not what to think but what to think about. Selection processes enabled media custodians to frame issues of importance for public consciousness. According to a 1977 pioneering study by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw, "complex social processes determine not only how to report but, even more important, what to report."[7] The conclusion was that gatekeeping and agenda-setting went hand-in-hand. However, this dynamic is changing.

Arguably, for the first time in history, new media has abolished traditional gatekeeper and agenda-setting roles. With the invention of Blogger in 1999, Pyra Labs created an easy-to-use method for anyone to publish his or her own thoughts in blog form. Google's purchase of Blogger in 2003 helped ignite a blogging explosion. Since that time, blogs have demonstrated the ability to thrust issues from obscurity into the national spotlight, while

> ### By August 2008, some 184 million blogs had proliferated worldwide…

demonstrating the ability to become agenda-setters for the 21st century.[8] In similar fashion, new media has also seized an important role in gatekeeping. YouTube, for example, has become its own gatekeeper by deciding which videos to host on its site and which to erase.

During conflict, the same dynamism plays havoc with traditional notions of the media's role in informing, shaping, and swaying public opinion. In 2003, Frank Webster argued in *War and the Media* that "the public are no longer mobilized to fight wars as combatants, they are mobilized as spectators—and the character of this mobilization is of the utmost consequence."[9] Although military historians might argue that this process is at least as old as the nation-state, new media has injected an equation-altering sense of scale and speed into the traditional calculus. In 2006, Howard Tumbler joined Webster in *Journalists Under Fire* to identify a "new" type of conflict the two commentators termed "Information War."[10] Like many other contemporary observers, they concluded that the familiar industrial model of warfare was giving way to an informational model. The struggle for public opinion retained central importance, but the sheer pervasiveness and responsiveness of new media recast the terms and content of the struggle. There were at least two clear implications. The first was that "the military has a commensurately more complex task in winning the information war."[11] The second was that there remains little choice but to engage new media as part of the larger media explosion. Failure to do so would leave a vacuum—the adversary's version of reality would become the dominant perception.

Even a brief survey of new media's nature and impact leaves military leaders with some powerful points worthy of consideration by senior civilian leaders:

● New media has the capacity to be nearly ubiquitous. With only a few notable exceptions (e.g., Chechnya and Western China), there is little escape from its span and grip.

● Like the old media, new media can also be enlisted to serve specific masters, though perhaps with greater difficulty.

● Properly understood, new media can be a source of great power and influence.

● New media holds a tremendous upside for education and for broadcasting the military's message.

● New media forces us to modify habits and to think consciously about the practical and constitutional obligations inherent in becoming our own version of gatekeepers and agenda-setters.

● New media is affecting modern conflict in significant ways not yet fully understood.

● Whatever the full implications might be, the military must embrace the new media; there is really no choice. Its power and dynamism dictate that military estimates accord it the attention and focus it deserves.

As the new media story continues to unfold, combat experience produces a stream of implications for theory and practice in pursuing doctrinal development. Two case studies recount the role of new media in recent conflicts waged by Israel. There are marked differences in the way the Israeli Defense Forces handled the media in the Hezbollah conflict during the summer of 2006 and in the Gaza incursion at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009. The two instances suggest "best practices" that the U.S. military could adopt when dealing with new media and its role on the battlefield. A discussion of each follows.

The Second Lebanon War: Information as a Warfighting Function?

On 12 July 2006, Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers just inside Israel across the Lebanese border. After a botched rescue attempt in which eight Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers were killed, Israel launched a massive air campaign, targeting both Hezbollah and much of Lebanon. There ensued an Israeli ground invasion of southern Lebanon and a kinetic fight that the Israelis subsequently dubbed the "Second Lebanon War."[12] Although various militaries have sifted the resulting combat experience for lessons learned, little attention has been devoted to Hezbollah's exploitation of information as a kind of "warfighting function," with new media as the weapon of choice.[13]

Hezbollah has characteristics that, in the view of some observers, make the organization a paradigm for future U.S. adversaries.[14] Hezbollah is neither a regular armed force nor a guerilla force in the traditional sense. It is a hybrid—something in between. As a political entity with a military wing, Hezbollah plays an important role in providing services to broad segments of the Lebanese population.[15] During the summer of 2006, the military wing demonstrated an impressive warfighting capability with an important information dimension: its fighters expertly leveraged new media capabilities while defending against their employment by the Israelis and while maintaining excellent operations security.

The conflict itself revealed many of the characteristics to which Webster and Tumbler had earlier referred. In a Harvard study on the media aspects of the 2006 war, the veteran journalist Marvin Kalb noted:

> To do their jobs, journalists employed both the camera and the computer, and, with the help of portable satellite dishes and video phones "streamed" or broadcast their reports…, as they covered the movement of troops and the rocketing of villages—often, (unintentionally, one assumes) revealing sensitive information to the enemy. Once upon a time, such information was the

The Bint Jbeil website depicts a village in southern Lebanon and the scene of fierce fighting between Israeli soldiers and Lebanese-based Hezbollah guerrillas, 27 July 2006.

stuff of military intelligence acquired with considerable effort and risk; now it has become the stuff of everyday journalism. The camera and the computer have become weapons of war.[16]

Kalb's observations emphasized a new transparency for war and military operations inherent in the ubiquity and power of new media. New technology and techniques—including digital photography, videos, cellular networks, and the Internet—were used by all parties: the press, Israeli and Lebanese civilians, the Israeli Defense Forces, and Hezbollah. The ease and speed of data transmission, coupled with the manipulation of images, affected the way participants and spectators viewed the war. Israeli soldiers sent cell phone text messages home, both sides actively used videos of the fighting, and civilians posted still and video imagery on blogs and websites, most notably YouTube.[17]

AFP, Ramzi Haidar

A poster of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah appears on a wall overlooking the rubble of his home in the Beirut southern suburb neighborhood of Haret Hreik, 8 August 2006.

Still, Hezbollah emerged as the master of the new media message. Playing David to Israel's Goliath, Hezbollah manipulated and controlled information within the operational environment to its advantage, using (at times staged and altered) photographs and videos to garner regional and worldwide support.[18] Additionally, Hezbollah maintained absolute control over where journalists went and what they saw, thus framing the story on Hezbollah's terms and affecting agendas for the international media.[19] The widely reported use of Katushya rockets against Israel became both a tactical kinetic weapon and a strategic psychological one. But less is written about the fact that Hezbollah employed near-real-time Internet press accounts as open-source intelligence to determine where the rockets landed. Post-conflict reporting indicates that non-affiliated organizations used Google Earth to plot the location of the rocket attacks.[20] While there is no firm evidence that Hezbollah used this capability to attain greater accuracy of fire, the fact remains that this new media capability could have been used to increase accuracy and multiply the strategic information effect.[21]

Meanwhile, Hezbollah used its own satellite television station, Al Manar, to extend its information reach to some 200 million viewers within the region.[22] As a direct link between Hezbollah's military activities and these viewers, Al Manar timed coverage of spectacular tactical actions for maximum strategic effect.[23] For example, within minutes of the Israeli naval destroyer *Hanit* being hit by missiles, Hezbollah's secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, called in "live" to Al Manar to announce the strike, and Al Manar obligingly provided footage of the missile launch for distribution by other regional media and subsequently by YouTube.[24] It took Israel 24 hours to respond with its own account of the incident.

The use of information as a strategic weapon did not end with the kinetic fight. Hezbollah continued

Post-conflict reporting indicates that non-affiliated organizations used Google Earth to plot the location of the rocket attacks.

to use self-justifying and self-congratulatory information to affect perceptions of blame, responsibility, and victory. Hezbollah leaders even went so far as to place billboards on the rubble of buildings in southern Lebanon that said "Made in the USA" (in English) immediately following the cease fire.[25]

Interestingly and importantly, Nasrallah did not appear to expect the full onslaught that characterized the Israeli response to the Second Lebanon War's triggering events.[26] Nevertheless, the way Hezbollah extensively enlisted information as a weapon of choice implies that this penchant is second-nature. That is, the emphasis on information is embedded in planning at all levels and inculcated in the culture of the military arm of Hezbollah. In strategic perspective, Hezbollah used information to reduce Israel's strategic options (and therefore its depth) in terms of time. An important focus was on proportionality, with Hezbollah exploiting the new media for information effects. Thus, Hezbollah portrayed Israeli Defense Forces military operations as a disproportionate use of force against the Lebanese civilian population, especially in light of the initial kidnapping incident that had spurred Israel to action. Not surprisingly, only 33 days after the onset of hostilities, a ceasefire was declared. And, again not surprisingly, after a David-and-Goliath struggle in which winning meant not losing, Hezbollah unilaterally declared victory.[27]

All this is not to say that Israel neglected various forms of information, including the new media, to support its war aims, but Tel Aviv's focus was on the traditional use of information in support of psychological operations against the enemy. Leaflets were dropped, Al Manar broadcasts were jammed, and cell phone text messages were pushed to Hezbollah combatants and Lebanese noncombatants. These activities amounted to traditional attempts at turning the public against the adversary and instilling fear in the adversary himself. However, attempts at all levels to garner popular support from broader audiences through trust and sympathy were lacking.

In contrast, Hezbollah information efforts focused directly on gaining trust and sympathy for its cause at all levels. Israel provided no countervailing view, allowing Hezbollah to drive perceptions that could become universally accepted as truth. Consequently, as Dr. Pierre Pahlavi of the Canadian Forces College notes, "the Jewish state forfeited the psychological upper hand on all fronts: domestic, regional, and international." Thus, Hezbollah was able to create a "perception of failure" for the Israelis, with consequences more important than the actual kinetic outcome.[28]

The Hezbollah experience presents lessons for potential adversaries of the United States. At the same time, the United States and its military must consider whether the strategy and tactics of Hezbollah might represent those of the next adversary and prepare accordingly. Meanwhile, Israel, only two and a half years after the events in Lebanon, appears to have taken the experience to heart in conducting recent operations against Hamas in Gaza.

Operation Cast Lead

During lunchtime on 27 December 2008, Israel unleashed a furious air attack that in mere minutes struck 50 targets in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. The daylight raid took Gazans by surprise and marked the beginning of a 24-day offensive designed to stop Gaza-based missiles from raining down on southern Israel. A fragile ceasefire between Hamas and Israel had ended just eight days earlier. Israel, determined to avoid mistakes from the "Second Lebanon War," embarked on a massive public relations campaign that employed new media extensively. In fact, one newspaper featured the headline: "On the front line of Gaza's war 2.0."[29] A war in cyberspace unfolded simultaneously with ground and air operations, and both sides employed various web 2.0 applications—including blogs, YouTube, and Facebook—to tell their differing versions of events.[30]

To learn from the Second Lebanon War, the Israelis created a special study group, the "Winograd Commission." The recommendation that followed was to organize an information and propaganda unit to coordinate public relations across a wide spectrum of activities, including traditional media, new media, and diplomacy.[31] The function of the resulting body, the National Information Directorate, was to deal with *hasbara*, or "explanation." One news source held that, "The hasbara directive also liaises over core messages with bodies such as friendship leagues, Jewish communities, bloggers and backers using online networks."[32] According to a press release from the Israeli Prime Minister's office,

> The information directorate will not replace the activity of any Government information

body. Its role will be to direct and coordinate in the information sphere so that the relevant bodies present a unified, clear, and consistent message and so that the various government spokespersons speak with a single voice. The directorate will initiate information campaigns and programs, host events, etc.[33]

With the National Information Directorate providing unity of message from the Prime Minister's office, the Israeli version of a strategic communication machine was ready to engage multiple media channels to win the war of ideas.

Two days after the airstrikes commenced, the Israeli Defense Forces launched its own YouTube channel, the "IDF Spokesperson's Unit." Within days, the channel became a sensation around the world. During early January 2009, the channel became the second most subscribed channel and ninth most watched worldwide, garnering more than two million channel views. The 46 videos posted to the channel have attracted more than 6.5 million views.[34] The videos depicted precision airstrikes on Hamas rocket-launching facilities, humanitarian assistance, video logs ("vlogs") by

IDF spokespeople, and Israeli tanks moving into position to attack. Hamas, not to be outdone, joined in the cyber-fracas with its own YouTube channels.

What was Israel's strategy for the use of new media during the Gaza incursion? The answer to this question lies partly in a study of contrasts. During the 2006 Lebanon War, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said: "My government is determined to continue doing whatever is necessary in order to achieve our goals. Nothing will deter us, whatever far-reaching ramifications regarding our relations on the northern border and in the region there may be."[35] He had also spoken about "destroying" Hezbollah.

In contrast, during the Gaza incursion, the Israeli leadership was far less definitive in its aims. It refused to place a timeline on operations and made no statements about completely neutralizing Hamas. Emanuel Sakal, former head of Israeli Defense ground forces, said, "Nobody declared that there will never be any rockets anymore, and nobody said that in five, six, or seven days we will destroy Hamas. They have learned a lot from Lebanon in 2006."[36] As in 2006, Israel knew it was fighting a war not just against Hamas, but against time. In virtually every conflict since 1948, the United Nations has passed resolutions to stop various Arab-Israeli conflicts. This military action was no exception. On 8 January 2009, UN Security Council Resolution 1860 called for an immediate cease fire in Gaza.[37] In addition, Israel had less than a month to complete operations in order to confront a new U.S. presidential administration with a *fait accompli.* Therefore, Israel used all the informational tools it possessed to buy time. The longer the incursion might be framed in a positive or neutral light, the longer the IDF could continue its actions without undue concern for world opinion. In contrast with 2006, the Israelis would
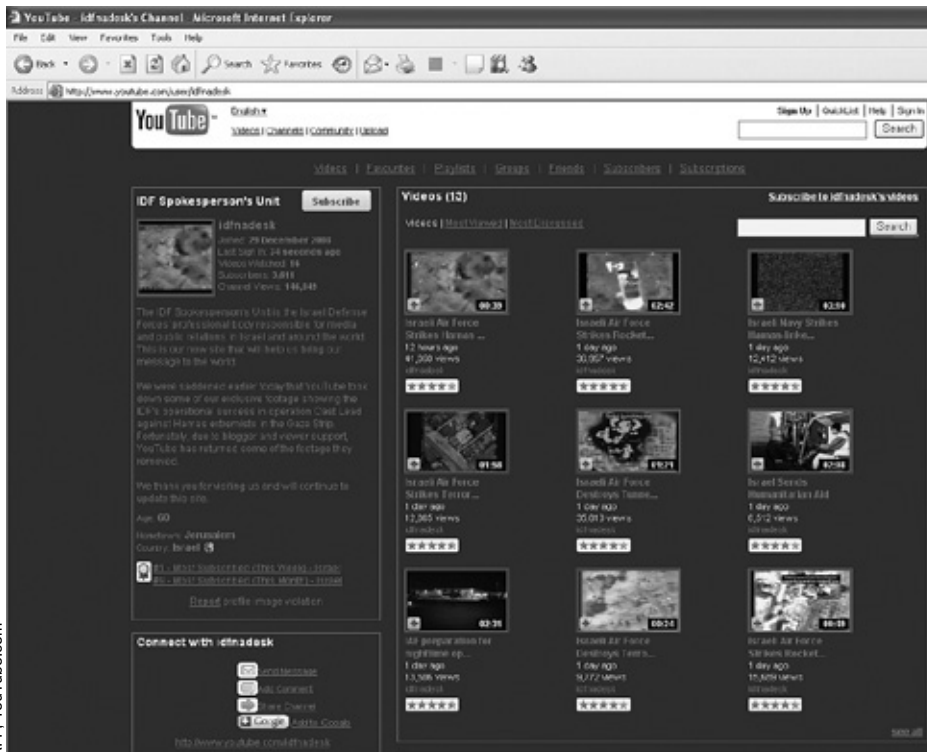
This screen print from the internet shows the Israeli army's YouTube-embedded webpage on 31 December 2008.

use the media to provide the strategic depth their country lacks. In fact, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni admitted as much in an email: "Intensive diplomatic activity in recent days is aimed at deflecting the pressure for a cease-fire to allow enough time for the operation to achieve its goals."[38]

Many of the YouTube channels supporting Hamas are no longer viewable. They appear to have fallen casualty to an information war in which both Palestinians and Israelis mobilized fellow countrymen to engage in a cyber battle for control of the social media sphere. Because new media abrogates the traditional gatekeeper's role, those who generate content in new media are their own gatekeepers. As information is added to new media, the process itself snowballs to become an agenda-setter. Both the Israelis and Palestinians understood this dynamic; therefore, both parties sought to control new media through coordinated efforts at creating supportive online communities that might act as force multipliers in cyberspace. *The Christian Science Monitor* reports—

> The online war over Gaza was relentless. Hackers on both sides worked to deface websites with one attack successfully redirecting traffic from several high-profile Israeli websites to a page featuring anti-Israel messages. Facebook groups supporting the opposing sides were quickly created and soon had hundreds of thousands of members.[39]

The Jewish Internet Defense Force rallied to the cause. On its web site, the defense force has guides to Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, Blogger, and WordPress.[40] This organization boasts that it has helped shut down dozens of extremist YouTube sites.[41] The Palestinians have retaliated by posting pro-Palestinian and pro-Hamas videos on Palutube. com, a site that is generally supportive of Hamas and its military wing, Al-Qassam. *The Jerusalem Post* even ran an article that described the exact steps necessary to safeguard web sites from hacker attacks.[42]

In the midst of the electronic war for public opinion, traditional media were denied access to the battlefield. The Israeli Defense Forces began limiting access to the potential battlefield several months before combat operations actually commenced in an effort to control the flow of information.[40] The Israelis also sought to limit the images of civilian casualties that had so eroded support during the war with Hezbollah in 2006. However, this strategy may have backfired. Without an independent foreign media presence, Hamas' claims of atrocities against civilians and exorbitant death tolls went unchallenged. Jonathan Finer pointed out the gaffe in a *Los Angeles Times* article:

> No doubt the Israeli government is worried about sympathies generated by stories of Palestinian suffering. But it cannot be enjoying media coverage from Gaza dominated by a context-free stream of images of the wounded, disseminated by people with unknown agendas. Claims from Palestinian officials of more than 900 people killed and a humanitarian crisis underway have been left to stand unverified, as have Israeli reports that Hamas militants are deliberately drawing fire to hospitals and schools.[44]

Even as Israel generated its own content on YouTube and Twitter, and even as Israel catered to influential bloggers, Gazans sent out tweets, updated blogs, and used cell phones to transmit photos of carnage to the outside world. *Al Jazeera* reporters, who were stationed in Gaza prior to the restrictions levied on entering journalists, provided riveting accounts of the war to the Arab world.

Despite reports that the National Information Directorate began planning the information element of Operation Cast Lead nearly six months prior to execution, IDF spokesperson Major Avital Leibovich admitted that the YouTube channel was the "brainchild of a couple of soldiers."[45] *Wired* blogger Noah Schachtman likewise reports that "the online piece was no strategy either. I met the kid who ran Israel's YouTube site…He thought it'd be kinda cool to share some videos online. So up went the site."[46] Schachtman goes on to assert that Israel's new media strategy collapsed as soon as mass casualty stories began to emerge from Gaza. However, Israel had bought the time it needed to conclude the operation.

Looking Forward as the Mediascape Continues to Fragment

Israel's experiences as gleaned from these two recent military actions illustrate the complex manner in which traditional and new media interact on the battlefield. In a 2006 *Military Review* article, Donald Shaw termed traditional media as "vertical" and alternate media (including new

… the military is forced to understand the complex interaction between traditional and new media…

media) as "horizontal." Vertical media does indeed have a top-down agenda-setting power. However, "vertical media's reach has declined while that of the alternative media—horizontal media that primarily interpret details—has increased."[47] The upshot is that the military is forced to understand the complex interaction between traditional and new media, while appreciating the limits of each.

By limiting the access of international media to the battlefield during Operation Cast Lead, the Israelis ensured no voice would refute Palestinian claims of atrocities and civilian targeting. Conversely, in 2006 the presence of outside media contributed to possible tactical and operational successes by Hezbollah. This observation gains more significance when one considers media reports in combination with the capabilities of Google Earth and other spatial applications.

As the media environment continues to fragment in the future, engaging ever-diversifying platforms and channels will become more difficult for the military. But, as General Creighton Abrams reputedly once said, "If you don't blow your own horn, someone will turn it into a funnel." Under condi-tions of the current new media blitz, his possibly apocryphal words might be paraphrased to say, "If you don't engage, someone else will fill the void." Surrendering the information environment to the adversary is not a practical option. Therefore, the military must seriously consider where information and the new media lie in relationship to conventional warfighting functions. One thing seems sure: we must elevate information in doctrinal importance, and adequately fund and staff organizations dealing with information.

The "era of persistent conflict" that characterizes today's operational environment is likely to endure for the foreseeable future, "with threats and opportunities ranging from regular and irregular wars in remote lands, to relief and reconstruction in crisis zones to sustained engagement in the global commons."[48] We must prepare thoroughly for the roles that new and traditional media are so certain to play in a less-than-stable future. Only by fostering a culture of engagement where the military proactively tells its own story in an open, transparent manner can we successfully navigate the many challenges of the media environment now and in the future. **MR**

NOTES

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2. "Now media" is attributed to Matt Armstrong. Armstrong is a strategist on public diplomacy and strategic communication and developed and runs the blog "mountain-runner.us," <http://mountainrunner.us>.

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4. Alexa, *Top Sites in the U.S.,* <www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_sites?cc=US&ts_mode=country&lang=none>.

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15. Reuven Erlich and Youram Kahati, "Hezbollah as a Case Study for the Battle of Hearts and Minds," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Israel Intelligence, Heritage and Commemoration Center, 2.

16. Kalb and Saivetz, 4.

17. The author, along with Dr. Rafal Rohozinski developed, planned and executed a workshop on the topic of "new media and the warfighter" at the U.S. Army War College in January, 2008. The workshop used the Second Lebanon War as a case study and the comments here reflect both the case study research and attendee input. [YouTube – is a video sharing website where users can upload, view, and share video clips. It is operated as a subsidiary of Google.] MR

18. Sarah E. Kreps, "The 2006 Lebanon War: Lessons Learned," *Parameters*, 37 (Spring 2007), 80.

19. Erlich and Kahati, 5.

20. [Google Earth – is a virtual globe, map and geographic information program that is operated by Google. It maps the Earth by the superimposition of images obtained from satellite imagery, aerial photography and GIS 3D globe.] MR

21. Rafal Rohozinski, case study on Leveraging New Media, for the "New Media and the Warfighter" workshop, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, January 2008.

22. Ibid.

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FROM EACH OF THESE several sorts of soldiers, the youngest alone excepted, ten men of distinguished merit are first selected; and after these, ten more. These are all called commanders of companies; and he that is first chosen has a seat in the military council. After these, twenty more are appointed to conduct the rear; and are chosen by the former twenty. The soldiers of each different order, the light troops excepted, are then divided into ten separate parts; to each of which are assigned four officers, of those who have been thus selected; two to lead the van, and two to take the care of the rear. The light-armed troops are distributed in just proportion among them all. Each separate part is called a company, a band, or an ensign; and the leaders, captains of companies or centurions. Last of all, two of the bravest and most vigorous among the soldiers are appointed by the captains to carry the standards of the company. It is not without good reason that two captains are assigned to every company. For as it always is uncertain, what will be the conduct of an officer, or to what accidents he may be exposed; and, as in the affairs of war, there is no room for pretext or excuse; this method is contrived, that the company may not upon any occasion be destitute of a leader. When the captains therefore both are present, he that was first chosen leads the right, and the other the left of the company. And when either of them is absent, he that remains takes the conduct of the whole. In the choice of these captains not those that are the boldest and most enterprising are esteemed the best; but those rather, who are steady and sedate; prudent in conduct, and skillful in command. Nor is it so much required, that they should be at all times eager to begin the combat, and throw themselves precipitately into action; as that, when they are pressed, or even conquered by a superior force, they should still maintain their ground, and rather die than desert their station.

A Greek Description of the Roman Army Company at the time of the Punic Wars.
From: Polybius, "The Military Institutions of the Romans," in The Library of Original Sources, Oliver J. Thatcher, ed. (Milwaukee, WI: University Extension Co., 1901), pp. 172-186 (DOD photo)