Divine Victory for Whom?

Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War

William M. Arkin

Introduction

Air warfare is inherently a difficult to imagine activity, and images of urban devastation, carpet bombing, and mass civilian casualties dominate public discourse. With the emergence of 24/7 television and the Internet in the 1990s—a period that also coincided with the maturation of precision weapons and airpower as the dominant component of strategic warfare—the challenge of "seeing" airpower ironically magnified even more. Air warfare "statistics" and gun camera video accumulated, but they communicated video game heartlessness and suggested perfection while emphasizing the almost industrial nature of the air warfare enterprise (Airmen even spoke of the "production" of sorties). Habitual operational security and the sensitivity of operating from foreign bases, together with the internal challenges of jointness, further constrained the telling of the airpower story.

Airpower's inherent quality and these constraints have made destruction the most accessible and visible element of the enterprise. Airpower and its targets have become intrinsically subject to greater review and audit because of the very economy of effort and the triumph of discrimination. The airpower story then, located almost always in "enemy" territory, has naturally become one-dimensional. The friendly briefing and public relations function has largely been reduced to one of incident management of the occasional, though highly magnified, mistake (i.e., industrial accident).

Israel faced all of these problems and more in 2006. Even ignoring the bigger question of prejudice against the Israeli state, Israel followed all of the self-defeating patterns of conveying the modern air war story. What

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is more, it operated with even more obsessive security classification and information control than the United States, making even the statistics of Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) activity sparing and inconsistent. Hezbollah, on the other hand, practiced not only consummate operational security but also mounted an extremely skillful and centralized information war, practicing admirable and strict message discipline. Hezbollah was further aided by a government of Lebanon that filled emotional, disorganized, and inaccurate space that let the terrorist organization bask as a seemingly passive bystander.

When I went to Lebanon and Israel in September 2006, I knew that telling the story of the air war, whatever I would find, would be difficult. So many minds had already been made up about Israel, about the destruction it caused, and about the failure of airpower. I was well aware that although a truth-telling effort was first needed to sort out what had actually happened from the false images and propaganda, I also was mindful that images of bomb damage and enumerations of a relentless effort could also end up conveying exactly the opposite of the actual meaning. The task at hand then is to tell the story of an airpower-dominated campaign, one that was deeply flawed in its design yet impressive in its efficiency, without being either pedantically faultfinding or apologetic about a modern instrument that is still little understood, even by its practitioners.

Overview

In the summer of 2006, Israel fought an intense 34-day war with Hezbollah, the first sustained modern air campaign conducted by a country other than the United States. As soon as the fighting was underway, many were declaring airpower oversold and inadequate. Commentators clamored for more-decisive ground action, asserting that only ground forces could defeat Hezbollah rocket fire, that the ground alternative would produce a "cleaner" and less tangled outcome, bring about different political realities, reduce civilian casualties and damage, and make greater gains in the battle for hearts and minds. When the Israeli government itself seemingly expressed its frustration with airpower and escalated ground fighting well into the second week of the campaign, airpower critics felt vindicated. The antiairpower view could not help but further echo with all of the stark images of Beirut, with the cavalcade of statistics of civilian deaths and destruction, and with the fact that barely six months after

the initial Hezbollah incursion across the Israeli border, the air force general who served as the chief of staff of the IDF—the first air force officer ever to command Israel's military—was gone. What is more, despite all of the claimed Israeli military accomplishments, Hezbollah was declared as strong as ever. The war itself has thus been labeled a failure by many, and many of the war's ills are blamed on airpower.

It is precisely because the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war was not fought by the United States, because it was an intense and technologically complex irregular conflict fought between a nation-state and a terrorist organization, and because it involved difficult questions of civilian protection and modern information warfare that the US Air Force and the US military should examine it closely. Analysis that does not assume fault or fall prey to biased anti-Israeli, antiairpower, or antiwar assumptions opens the way for better military doctrine and plans; for a deeper understanding of the issues associated with so-called "effects based operations" and the battle for hearts and minds; for the achievement of maximized civilian protections; and, dare I say, even for better military command and political direction and expectations in the future.

Last September—barely a month after Israel and Hezbollah implemented a UN-brokered cease-fire—I arrived at Beirut International Airport as military advisor to a UN fact-finding mission. Having previously been involved in postwar evaluations of air campaigns in Afghanistan, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, and even in Lebanon, I was fully prepared to find much to be desired in the conventional narrative of damage and destruction, as well as much to criticize in the claims of military achievement and/or failure. Lebanon did not disappoint.

On the one hand, I arrived on a regularly scheduled airline at the ultramodern Beirut International Airport, took a taxi to a five-star hotel, and hooked up to a high-speed Internet connection. Here in the heart of Lebanon's capital, the "destroyed" airport was already back in operation; the electric power grid—reportedly also bombed—was operating as it had been prewar; everyone seemed permanently attached to their cell phones, habitually talking and texting: the city was abuzz with life. It was immediately clear, at least to me, that Israel had exercised some degree of discrimination: right or wrong, it had made choices of what to bomb and what not to bomb.

Yet, just a short drive from Beirut's swank downtown was the utter ruin of *dahiye*—the southern Shi'a neighborhoods of mostly illegal apartment

blocks, once home to hundreds of thousands of Lebanon's poorest, and the center for Hezbollah. Here is how one observer described the area midwar: "Block after block of extraordinary canyons of devastation . . . multi-storey [*sic*] tenements collapsed or eviscerated, their domestic interiors spilled in mountainous waves of rubble across the streets."[1] I saw the same: well over 100 high-rise buildings completely destroyed and a similar number badly damaged and burned. Irrespective of the causes of the conflict and the military justification or lack thereof for Israel to attack each individual building, Beirut's southern suburbs suffered a level of damage unmatched by any other example of bombing in the precision era. In southern Lebanon, hundreds of towns and villages and thousands upon thousands of homes showed similar levels of severe destruction. The frontline villages that were fought over nearest the border were the most devastated, and dozens of bridges and miles of roads were damaged and destroyed. The picture in Beirut and the south, and the dominant international narrative of Israel's wholesale destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure and economy—of rampant civilian casualties, of hundreds upon hundreds of schools, mosques, hospitals, and factories destroyed and of unexploded ordnance littering the countryside—suggests excess, indiscriminate bombing, and intentional and malicious destruction.

But is any of the evidence true; and death and damage compared to what? Virtually absent from this picture for many in the international community and the Arab world is Hezbollah, an organization that managed to fire over 4,000 rockets and projectiles at 160 Israeli settlements, towns, and cities (and over 1,000 powerful antitank missiles inside Lebanon!), mounting an organized and capable defense against what would eventually be 30,000 Israeli troops fighting in some 16 enclaves in the south. Despite Israeli efforts, Hezbollah rocket fire was never subdued, and the organization's military operations were never fully suppressed, demonstrating just how prepared Hezbollah was and how entrenched the fighting force was in the country's civilian fabric. And yet, when human rights organizations and much of the international community showed up or commented, they seemed to act as if the force Israel was battling was nonexistent. As for the critique of airpower, the connotation was that somehow a full-fledged ground war with the same mission against this same tricky and dug-in force would have been both more successful and less destructive.

The level of destruction in southern Beirut and south Lebanon certainly suggests a very different kind of campaign waged by Israel. Israel chose to go to war over the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers, seemingly choosing as well to disregard the central American tenet of precision—that fewer weapons and less physical destruction can achieve desired effects with far less "collateral" damage, human and political. But Israel is also a country that pursued its war from a different political reality. The United States may have conducted a half-dozen air campaigns in the precision era, but it has never had to fight an enemy on its borders, nor has it had to make the tough decision of exacting as much damage as possible on a mortal enemy regardless of the political consequences.

None of this is to excuse any actual Israeli excesses. Israel's military strategy was indeed deeply flawed. Israel bombed too much and bombed the wrong targets, falling back upon cookie-cutter conventional targeting in attacking traditional military objects. Individual elements of each target group might have been justified, but Israel also undertook an intentionally punishing and destructive air campaign against the people and government of Lebanon. All the while, the IDF seemed to satisfy itself with conventional measures of "success"—accumulating statistics of Hezbollah launchers and rockets hit, dead fighters, and destroyed Hezbollah "structures." Israel may have satisfied itself that every building and structure it was attacking in Beirut and every civilian home in the south was associated with Hezbollah, but the cumulative impact was far less impressive militarily and far more politically damaging than the planners and commanders projected.

As the conflict escalated, destruction in Beirut and the south accumulated, as did overall damage to the Lebanese civilian infrastructure. There is no question that the IDF was intensely focused on destroying rockets and launch sites, killing Hezbollah fighters, destroying weapons storage, bunkers, and other strictly military objects. But hundreds if not thousands of civilian buildings were also promiscuously labeled Hezbollah "structures" and attacked in the name of degrading or destroying that organization. The argument we hear from the Israeli government is that it had no alternative—that these otherwise civilian homes and buildings had to be attacked because of the nature of Hezbollah and its use of Lebanese society as a "shield."

If this is true, is there a different strategy Israel could have pursued against Hezbollah to achieve its objectives with less political fallout? In

order to answer that question one needs to be honest about the actual record of Israeli attacks, not some hyperbolic description of destruction. Lebanon was not systematically destroyed, an objective certainly within Israel's reach.

Gross destruction was visited upon Hezbollah's stronghold in south Beirut, but that destruction was still undertaken with precision, as is evidenced by its coexistence with vast untouched areas of the city. Israel indeed made decisions and took steps to limit civilian harm. Israel made a decision at an extremely high political level not to attack Lebanon's electric power grid (as it had done in 1996) and not to attack any water-related targets. It did not "attack" hospitals, or schools, or mosques, or Lebanon's "refinery," though all were reported as such. Israel indeed showed initial restraint on the ground, a decision that could and should be interpreted not as some airpower daydream or a lack in "understanding" ground war but as a desire to avoid a protracted battle, an occupation, and all of the subsequent killing and destruction that would follow. As part of its preplanned retaliation for the kidnapping, Israel also did not initially attack any targets in south Beirut, even Hezbollah leadership, despite the fact that a surprise attack might have achieved decapitation.

As the war quickly escalated, Israel never realized much benefit from these sound decisions. Frustrated by its inability to stem rocket attacks on Israeli soil, Israel expanded its attacks on civilian targets to exact punishment on Hezbollah supporters and the government and people of Lebanon. Israel doggedly explained its action by reiterating again and again that Hezbollah fighters were "terrorists" and that Hezbollah was ultimately responsible for any damage caused, but outside of a small circle of supporters, Israel increasingly was objectified as the aggressor.

Hezbollah's resilience demonstrated that the organization had deep roots and enormous popular support in Lebanon, and yet Israeli political and military leaders seemed to believe their own propaganda that Hezbollah had no Lebanese support, was weak, and was losing. From this stemmed a wholly conventional measure of success that Israel seemed content to apply: Hezbollah's six years of investment and effort to build up infrastructure in Lebanon were gone, the routes of Syrian and Iranian resupply were disrupted, 70–80 percent of the long-range and 50 percent of the short-range launchers were destroyed, half of the stock of actual rockets and missiles was destroyed or expended, and more than 600 Hezbollah fighters were dead. Destruction of the organization's support infrastruc-

ture—roads and bridges, fuel, communications, media, even financial institutions—accumulated. The facts were all valid, but Israel just could not make a holistic analysis of the military benefit relative to the human (and political) impact.

Some commentators and observers seem content to chalk up any conceded failures on Israel's part to intelligence failure: Hezbollah, they say, possessed sophisticated Syrian and Iranian arms, "surprising" and abundant technology, and was not some lightly armed militia but a professional fighting force. This argument seems particularly weak: first, because Israeli intelligence knew enough about what Hezbollah was and possessed; and second, because it was Israel's very stubbornness in seeing Hezbollah as a conventional military force—armed with 12,000 rockets and missiles and other weapons—that influenced pursuit of a conventional military strategy in the first place. If anything, the IDF would have preferred an even more-conventional battle. After all, that is what the IDF is best at and would provide the clearest outcome.

As Hezbollah's secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised address during the conflict though, "We are not a regular army and we will not fight like a regular army." Hezbollah was morally and politically strengthened in the face of the Israeli military—with celebrations rippling through the Arab world that Israel was thwarted (just as the United States has been in Iraq)—because the only damage done to the organization indeed was "conventional." Here is the narrative that is heard from the Arab "street" and from huge segments of the Arab population that extend far beyond the Hezbollah faithful: Israel and the United States use their technology and their conventional might to bomb the Arab people back to the stone age, showing no regard for civilians, destroying homes and mosques and schools and bridges and factories and even gas stations. Given that "they" don't have F-16s to fight with, they are reduced to using rockets or airliners or suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices (IED) to strike back.

Hezbollah may not have defeated Israel on the battlefield, but the organization won the hearts and minds of many. Hezbollah's own narrative as it moves forward is that it survived the best that Israel could throw at it, that only a few of its fighters were killed (in other words, that only Lebanese civilians were hit), and that only it stood up to Israel and was victorious.

Lining the Beirut International Airport access road just days after the cease-fire were a freshly erected set of billboards. "Divine Victory," they

proclaim, with various photographs of uniformed and civilian-clad Hezbollah fighters loading Soviet-style Katyusha rocket launchers. "A Victory from God," alternating signs exclaim over the faces of Lebanese children and celebrating civilians. In all, the billboard displays along Lebanon's main roads develop three key themes: Hezbollah courage, Lebanon's resilience, and defeat of the "invincible" Israeli army.

So Israel is stuck, as is the United States, with the conundrum of modern conventional military power in the fight against terrorism. Both countries intone that they are fighting a "new" enemy, but neither seems able to modify its conventional military approach and get away from fighting in old ways. Israel and the United States can win all of the conventional battles and accumulate statistical successes to no political avail and to future detriment. It is clear that an alternative is needed, but the dominant alternative postulated by pundits and experts is that Israel just needed to be more aggressive on the ground in gaining control of southern Lebanon to stem the firing of rockets. Israel, this line of argument goes, placed too much faith on airpower, failing to launch a broad enough ground offensive until it was too late. Blinded by the false promise of winning "on the cheap," Israel failed to learn the US lesson from Iraq: committing too few troops. What is more, Israel "lost" the information war, outsmarted by a clever and duplicitous practitioner of political theater that ensured Israel had to inflict civilian harm in order to fight it.

Many in the Israeli government and IDF defend the war's achievements, however seemingly modest militarily—damage to Hezbollah's fighting capability, expulsion of the organization from its sanctuary on the Israeli border, a message of Israeli willingness to use great force in response to provocations—as not only notable but also better than the alternatives of either inaction or even greater overreaction and a quagmire. Airpower of course facilitated these achievements by uniquely allowing rapid "strategic" attacks and disengagement. None of this is to say that how airpower was applied was particularly imaginative or forward looking, but there is no question that airpower was the tool and the enabler.

More troops and a massive ground invasion would indeed have produced a different outcome, but the notion that somehow that effort would have resulted in a more decisive victory over Hezbollah, fewer political problems, and less destruction and fewer civilian casualties, has no basis in historical example or logic. There has to have been a different course to follow. Airpower as it was employed is not that alternative, but lost

in the shuffle of the unresolved ground versus air rivalry and the intense emotional and political issues regarding Israel and Hezbollah are the most interesting questions as to how the most modern and flexible instrument could best be employed in the future.

The Road to War

At around 9:05 a.m. on Wednesday, 12 July 2006, Hezbollah initiated "True Promise," a meticulously planned and coordinated operation involving rocket, antitank missile, mortar, and sniper fire intended to mask a raid to kidnap Israeli soldiers. Katyusha rockets and mortars rained down on IDF border posts and villages at multiple points from Zar'it to Dovev in the central sector. Within sight of the hilltop village of Aiyt a-Shab across from border mark 105, about 20 Hezbollah fighters attacked a pair of patrolling Division 91 Humvees. One Humvee was destroyed by a long-range antitank missile, and three soldiers were killed; a second Humvee was hit with rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire, and two reserve soldiers—Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev—were captured.[2]

The incursion precipitated Israeli emergency "Hannibal" procedures and retaliatory strikes on Hezbollah border observation posts and positions opposite Zar'it. An exchange of fire between the IDF and Hezbollah gunners then ensued across much of the entire Blue Line, with heavy bombardment also occurring in the areas around Bint Jbeil and in the Shebaa Farms area of Golan Heights. For the first time in six years, IDF conventional forces entered southern Lebanon in pursuit of the kidnappers.[3] The platoon-sized force met with intense small arms and antitank missile fire, walking into an obvious trap: a pre-positioned explosive just over the border was detonated under a pursuing Israeli Merkava tank at about 11 a.m., killing four additional soldiers.[4]

Within an hour of the initial clash, Al-Manar, the Hezbollah-owned and run television network in Beirut, was reporting that the Islamic Resistance, the military arm of Hezbollah, had captured two Israeli soldiers and that Israeli artillery was "pounding" the fringes of Aiyt a-Shab, nearby Ramiya, and Yaroun.[5] At 10 a.m., Hezbollah secretary-general Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah held a rare press conference, confirming that his organization had indeed kidnapped the Israeli soldiers, saying that they were in a "safe and far" away place and that they would only be released as part of a swap.[6] "No military operation will return them," Nasrallah said. "The prisoners

will not be returned except through one way: indirect negotiations and a trade."[7] Congratulating the Hezbollah kidnappers and fighters, Nasrallah said the organization had so far exercised "self restraint" in its operations. "We have no intention to escalate or to start a war. But if the enemy seeks that they will pay a price," he said. "We are ready for a confrontation to the extreme." Nasrallah also called on all Lebanese to come together in a "national front" against Israel.[8] As news of the kidnapping emerged, Hezbollah supporters took to the streets of south Beirut, firing guns in the air and setting off firecrackers to celebrate. "God is great . . . our prisoners will be out soon," the media reported them chanting.[9]

At about 10:20 a.m., Israel initiated a wave of preplanned air strikes in southern Lebanon,[10] initially attacking 17 Hezbollah command posts and bases, as well as three southern bridges over the Litani River.[11] Lebanese government "security" officials commented on the Israeli strikes at about 11:00 a.m., saying that bridges, roads, and Hezbollah positions had been attacked. The Israeli objective, these Lebanese officials opined, was "to block any escape route for the guerrillas," which might then prevent an Israeli rescue mission.[12]

At midday, Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert appeared before the news media as part of a photo opportunity associated with a previously scheduled meeting with the Japanese prime minister, who was in Jerusalem. Olmert called the attacks and kidnapping "an act of war" and held the Lebanese government responsible for Hezbollah's behavior. "I want to make it clear, the events of this morning are not a terror attack but an act by a sovereign state which attacked the state of Israel without reason or provocation," Olmert said. He vowed that the Israeli response would be "restrained, but very, very, very painful."[13] Israeli TV also reported that IDF chief of staff Lt Gen Dan Halutz warned that the Israeli assault would "turn back the clock in Lebanon by 20 years" if the soldiers were not returned.[14]

Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora phoned UN secretary-general Kofi Annan soon after the kidnappings to ask that the UN "prevent Israeli aggression" against Lebanon. Meeting in Rome with Italian premier Romano Prodi, Annan publicly called for the immediate release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers and condemned Israel's retaliation. "I condemn without reservations the attack in southern Lebanon, and demand that Israeli troops be released immediately," he said.[15]

Siniora also summoned an aide to Nasrallah to his office in downtown Beirut to ask what Hezbollah had done. Just a few days earlier Nasrallah

had assured the Lebanese government that it would be a calm summer and a successful tourist season, and that Hezbollah rockets "deterred" Israel from attacking. "It will calm down in 24 to 48 hours," the aide assured the Lebanese prime minister.[16] "The government was not aware of and does not take responsibility for, nor endorse what happened on the international border," Siniora told the news media.[17]

At about 6 p.m., Maj Gen Udi Adam, commander of the Northern Command responsible for Lebanon, spoke to the press from his headquarters in northern Israel. He said Israel was responding "very forcefully in the air, sea, and land, and is readying for a mighty response later. . . . As to where to attack, everything is legitimate . . . not just southern Lebanon and Hezbollah's border positions."[18]

Adam reiterated Olmert's and Halutz's warnings that Israel held the Lebanese government accountable. "The moment a state is responsible, we will realize and demand this responsibility," Adam said. Though he demurred in elaborating about what he called "wide ranging and comprehensive" IDF operational plans, he said that the Israeli objective would be to destroy Hezbollah's military capabilities and push the organization "away from the border."[19]

While Adam was speaking, the Israeli Security Cabinet was convening in emergency session. Olmert says he was in contact with Halutz and Minister of Defense Amir Peretz from the first moments of the border incident. "I have issued instructions to the security establishment," he said; "I have coordinated with Defense Minister Peretz, naturally."[20] Now the Cabinet was formally meeting to hear briefings from IDF representatives and the general staff and receive the recommendations of Halutz as to possible responses. After the meeting, a Cabinet communiqué was issued, which read in part:

> Israel views the sovereign Lebanese Government as responsible for the action that originated on its soil and for the return of the abducted soldiers to Israel. Israel demands that the Lebanese Government implement UN Security Council Resolution #1559. . . .
>
> Israel will respond aggressively and harshly to those who carried out, and are responsible for, today's action, and will work to foil actions and efforts directed against it. . . . Israel must respond with the necessary severity to this act of aggression and it will indeed do so.[21]

Throughout the afternoon and night of 12 July, Hezbollah and Israel traded rocket, artillery, mortar, and small arms fire over the border. On

the ground, Hezbollah attempted two additional infiltrations in the central sector, and fighters armed with RPG launchers and antitank missiles battled IDF rescuers who crossed into Lebanon. Hezbollah rocket attacks continued into Israel against border villages and the area of Mount Meron, and snipers fired on the Israeli town of Rosh Hanikra on the coast.[22] An Israeli army spokesman said it was an "unprecedented attack" in terms of the number of Israeli villages targeted and the depth of the rocket strikes.[23] In the first 24 hours, Hezbollah launched some 60 rockets into Israel, as well as dozens of mortars and other projectiles.

Israel maintained its own artillery and rocket fire against Hezbollah positions throughout the day and night, attacking targets along the entire breadth of the Lebanese border from Naqoura on the coast to Kfar Shouba, less than 10 kilometers (km) from the Syrian border. A second wave of air strikes occurred in the afternoon, and another 40 targets were attacked by air and naval fire overnight. In the first 24 hours, the IDF had carried out over 100 "aerial" attacks, the IDF said.[24] An Israeli army statement said that more than 30 targets associated with preventing the transfer of the abducted soldiers, including the main bridges over the Litani and Zahrani rivers and the north-south coastal road, had been attacked.[25] A senior IDF officer said that dozens of Katyusha launching sites were attacked, with approximately 40 destroyed. The IDF also said that approximately 30 Hezbollah fighters were killed in the first 24 hours.[26]

When Major General Adam appeared before the news media barely nine hours into the operation on 12 July, he was prepared to give a glowing assessment. "We are in control," the combatant commander said of Israeli forces. "We have destroyed *all* the Hezbollah outposts in the border, and we are now continuing to operate in depth, mainly from sea and air."[27] (emphasis added) Given the official pronouncement of Adam and others, Israeli media followed with its own glowing assessment. With reports of an attack on Beirut's international airport, Israeli radio reported early Thursday that "southern Lebanon *has been cut off* from the rest of the country after our aircraft, helicopters, and naval vessels bombed dozens of targets, including about 20 bridges, the roads of southern Lebanon and other parts of the country."[28] (emphasis added) "*All* the bridges" between the Israeli border and Beirut on the coastal road had been bombed, Voice of Israel said.[29] (emphasis added)

Certainly the most visible and symbolic Israeli target in the first 24 hours—and the northernmost strike—was Beirut's Rafiq Hariri Interna-

tional Airport. At 4 a.m. on 13 July, aircraft placed four 2,000 pound laser-guided bombs with BLU-109 hard-target warheads on runway intersections to shut down airport operations.[30] Though some Israeli spokesmen described the airport as a transportation node in the same category with bridges, justifying the attack as impeding export of the abducted soldiers, an Israeli army spokesman said that "the reason for the attack is that the airport is used as a central hub for the transfer of weapons and supplies to the Hezbollah terror organization."[31] Acting Lebanese minister of the interior Ahmed Fatfat opined that the airport attack had nothing to do with Hezbollah but was instead an attack against Lebanon's "economic interests," especially its summer tourism industry.[32]

By the afternoon of 13 July, the Beirut airport attack was the only significant strike the IDF had mounted beyond southern Lebanon and, other than attacks on bridges, it was the only "civilian infrastructure" attack. The wire services, nevertheless, were describing significant destruction to the country of Lebanon overall and saying that as many as 52 civilians had been killed in air strikes, with another 100 wounded.[33] "They are killing civilians because they cannot kill Hezbollah militants," a Lebanese man was quoted as saying. "They want to bring us back to the occupation era. . . . Will the world continue to watch them kill children without doing anything?"[34]

Before it was clear how many civilians indeed had been killed or under what circumstances, an Israeli spokeswoman expressed regret, saying the IDF had "no intention whatsoever to harm innocent civilians."[35] Israeli Air Force (IAF) chief Brig Gen Amir Eshel explained, "Hezbollah has established its infrastructure in the heart of a peaceful civilian population and our challenge is to attempt to target this infrastructure accurately while exerting the greatest efforts to avoid harming non-combatants."[36]

Hezbollah had fired rockets and artillery into Israel and was continuing to do so, it had kidnapped Israeli soldiers, and it was exacting Israeli civilian deaths and injuries. But barely 24 hours into the crisis—despite Israel's actual attacks and despite Israeli statements of regret and caution—France, Russia, Italy, and others condemned Israel's actions as "disproportionate."[37] Kofi Annan's personal representative to Lebanon, Gier Pederson, said he was "highly alarmed by Israel's *heavy attacks* and escalation."[38] (emphasis added) Amnesty International called for a cessation of Israeli attacks on Lebanese civilian infrastructure, citing the supposed attack on Lebanese electrical power.[39] The Arab League called an emergency meeting.

Could it be the criticism had nothing to do with Israel's actual conduct? After all, though there were news media reports that Israel had struck an electrical power plant in southern Lebanon, there was actually no such attack on the first day.[40] Media reporting about attacks into Beirut were also exaggerated and erroneous. At first, the wire services quoted Al-Jazeera television as saying that 26 civilians had been killed in the Beirut airport attack.[41] Later reports that same day mentioned three dead at the airport; evidently Al-Jazeera was reporting a total of 26 civilians killed overall in southern Lebanon.[42] Lebanese police later told Agence France-Presse (AFP), the French news agency, that no civilians had indeed been killed in the attack on the airport, but that 27 Lebanese civilians, "including 10 children," had been killed overall.[43]

Disproportionate or not, Hezbollah responsibility or not, the conflict clearly had a different character than the dozens of other Israeli-Hezbollah incidents that had occurred since the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000—escalation was in the air. On the morning of 13 July, the leading Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* reported that Israel would target Hezbollah in Beirut in response to any attacks on northern Israeli cities; Hezbollah responded by threatening to attack the northern port city of Haifa if Israel attacked Beirut.[44] A senior IDF officer was quoted on Israeli radio as threatening "grave harm to Lebanese civilian infrastructures . . . linked to Hezbollah" if the organization escalated its attacks.[45] General Halutz, who the previous day warned that Israeli bombing would turn back the Lebanese clock 20 years, said on 13 July that "nothing" was safe in the country.[46] "It is impossible that we will continue to be in a situation where in Beirut people are sleeping peacefully, while people in northern Israel are sitting in bomb shelters," Silvan Shalom, a Likud member of the Knesset said.[47]

As evening approached on Thursday, 13 July, Hezbollah rockets hit the Stella Maris neighborhood of Haifa, the furthest south that rockets fired from Lebanon had ever hit.[48] Hezbollah initially denied that it had attacked Haifa, hoping, it seems, to save the escalatory move if Israel indeed attacked Hezbollah targets in south Beirut. "Bombing Haifa would be linked to any bombing of Beirut and its suburbs," Sheikh Naim Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary-general, told Al-Jazeera television. "It would be . . . a reaction and not preemptive."[49] Hezbollah secretary-general Nasrallah, for his part, claimed to Al-Jazeera television that it was not Hezbollah which escalated:

> We were not the ones who began the war or the ones who launched a large-scale war. . . . It is not from the first moment after we captured two soldiers that we began to shell Nahariya, Haifa, Tiberias and Zefat and launched war. No. Even in advancing, the Israelis were much faster than us. We were patient in the hope that things would stop at this point because we don't want to take our country to war.[50]

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Daniel Ayalon, immediately called the attack on Haifa "a major, major escalation."[51] Soon after the strike, four Israeli attack helicopters were back at the international airport, shooting air-to-surface missiles at airport fuel tanks, setting them on fire and lighting up the Beirut night sky. Defense Minister Peretz said that Israel would now "break" Hezbollah.[52]

Before the Haifa attack, though, Israel had already dropped leaflets over south Beirut warning residents to stay away from Hezbollah strongholds:

> To the Inhabitants of Lebanon
>
> Due to the terrorist activities carried out by Hezbollah which destroys [*sic*] the effort to find a brighter future for Lebanon[,] [t]he Israeli Army will continue its work within Lebanon for as long as it deems fit to protect the citizens of the State of Israel.
>
> For your own safety and because we do not wish to cause any more civilian deaths, you are advised to avoid all places frequented by Hezbollah.
>
> You should know that the continuation of terrorist activities against the State of Israel will be considered a double-edged sword for you and Lebanon.
>
> The State of Israel[53]

Now as part of its escalation for Hezbollah attacks on Haifa, the IDF implemented what its spokesmen labeled "deterrence" strikes; reaching into south Beirut to attack buildings in the main Hezbollah headquarters complex, the home of Secretary-General Nasrallah, and the headquarters of Hezbollah's Al-Manar television. But as part of its punishment strategy against the government of Lebanon, Israeli aircraft also attacked two Lebanese military airfields—Qulayaat near Tripoli and Riyaq in the north Bekaa Valley—a reminder as well to the Lebanese military to stay out of the fight after it fired on Israeli aircraft overflying Sidon.[54] A handful of television and radio transmission and relay stations were also added to the target list.

Probably everything that there is to be said about the Israeli-Hezbollah war of 2006 can be traced to these first 48 hours: each side firmly believing that it was taking the action necessary for its security and standing;

each convinced that it could control its actions, its opponent's reactions, and the effects; and each believing as well that it could precisely signal its intentions. The two sides implemented their "plans," suggesting deliberation and a thorough understanding of their objectives and of the enemy. Yet neither side really could anticipate how the conflict would unfold, nor did they properly assess the capabilities or actions of the other. Neither side really believed that there was ultimately a "military" solution that they could pursue to achieve victory over the other, yet they succumbed to the inexorable drag of war.

From the very beginning of the 2006 conflict, information warfare and propaganda played a prominent role. The "IDF will continue to operate decisively to defend the citizens of the State of Israel against terror originating from Lebanese territory and to bring about conditions leading to the safe return of the two kidnapped soldiers," the Israeli government stated and then reiterated every day in its press releases. The responsibility for any civilian deaths rests with Hezbollah, IDF spokesmen repeated again and again. The news media were filled with stories—many demonstrably false—about Israeli conspiracies and misdeeds, about "illegal" weapons being used in Lebanon, about massive civilian casualties and infrastructure damage, and yet it seemed all the Israeli information apparatus could do in response was to mechanically make statements that left Hezbollah firmly in control of the information battlefield.

Obviously any conflict involving Israel and an Islamic terrorist organization is guaranteed to incite deep passions, but even the most dispassionate of observers could not help being buffeted and confused as the war of narratives unfolded. Even under the best of circumstances, an air campaign is difficult to describe, and the narrative lacks the kind of personal storytelling and frontline heroics so characteristic of ground war. Add to all of this the excessive secrecy practiced by the IDF regarding the basic facts of its actions, and even of its military units, and no wonder the international community and much of the news media jumped to conclusions. Though Israel and Hezbollah (as well as Lebanon) were fighting a ferocious battle for hearts and minds, what was crystal clear from 12 July was that even in the transparent Internet era, even in a conflict involving two countries with wide-open news environments, there was not only an absence of consensus about what was really going on, but there was also widespread misunderstanding.

The War

On 12 July, when Israel decided to respond to the Hezbollah attacks, incursion, and kidnapping with a major military operation, the government of Ehud Olmert laid out a set of four objectives for the IDF to guide its operations:

- Return of the two abducted soldiers;
- Imposition of a new order in Lebanon, particularly in southern Lebanon;
- The strengthening of Israel's deterrent against external attack; and
- The crushing of Hezbollah.

The Cabinet stated in its first communiqué that Israel would "respond aggressively and harshly to those who carried out, and are responsible for, today's action."[55] Though some in the Cabinet favored broader objectives, including attacking Lebanese infrastructure beyond bridges and roads, attacking Syria directly, and seeking the elimination of Hezbollah as an explicit objective of the campaign, military sources say that the IDF argued that these were not feasible objectives.[56]

The first three objectives were as much political as military in nature. Though Israel subsequently undertook military and special operations to rescue its soldiers, its long history with kidnappings and back-channel negotiations with Hezbollah consigned the problem to the political and clandestine world. The second objective sought Lebanese implementation of UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 1559, which demanded that the central government exercise sovereignty over southern Lebanon and disband independent militias.[57] Israel hoped to end Hezbollah's status as a permissible state within a state, but it was again as much a political objective as a military one. At least initially, the Israeli government did not pursue ground operations to physically eject the organization from the border area or to disarm it.[58] The third objective was political as well. Some felt that Israel needed to project a stronger image against Hezbollah and the Palestinians after the 2000 withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza to prevent future attacks. Others felt that Israel's deterrence target was actually Iran (and the buildup of Iran's so-called Western Command in Lebanon),[59] while others saw the target as both Iran and Syria.

The final objective of crushing Hezbollah was the purely military one, though what exactly the government asked the IDF to do—weaken, cripple, annihilate—represents potentially different approaches and levels of effort along a spectrum of destruction. According to IDF and Israeli government officials, the operation did have specific quantitative military objectives: *x* percent of weapons destroyed, *x* percent of long-range launchers depleted, *x* percent of Hezbollah leadership and fighters killed, and so forth, but the percentages are unknown. "I said from day one, and all the way through, that the purpose was not to destroy Hizbullah [*sic*]," Prime Minister Olmert later responded to war critics who claimed that the government ordered the IDF to indeed "destroy" the organization:

> The purpose was not to destroy every launcher. The ambition was not to catch every Hizbullah [*sic*] fighter. The purpose was to impose a new order on Lebanon that would remove to a large degree . . . the threat to the state of Israel that was built up over the last 6 or 7 years to an intolerable degree. I never said we would destroy Hizbullah [*sic*]. What I said was that we had to create a new order on the basis of implementation of [UNSCR] 1559, and the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south of Lebanon, and so on. How to do it? Not by catching every launcher.[60]

General Halutz told the Cabinet that the IDF would require nine to 10 weeks to carry out the assigned objectives: two weeks focused on counter battery fire to silence Hezbollah rockets and mortars followed by a six- to eight-week ground operation. Maj Gen Benjamin Gantz, the ground forces commander, said he thought that the IDF "would take control of the area in a week and a half, during which time enemy launch capability would be dramatically degraded. Between week two and week nine, we wouldn't have faced significant warfare on our home front, which would have allowed us to focus on eradicating Hezbollah's efforts to threaten Israel. It also would have provided a week or two for a proper disengagement and return to the border area."[61]

"We said that Katyushas would fall on Israel up to the last day," Halutz said of the Cabinet discussions. "Our assessment was that the fighting would stop earlier because of international intervention."[62]

The Cabinet instructed the IDF to impose a complete air, sea, and land blockade on Lebanon and approved a series of targets for attack. Authority was given to attack Hezbollah headquarters, bases, and tactical positions in the south, and the Cabinet approved limited attacks on Beirut's international airport and Lebanese transportation to put pressure on the government of Lebanon and weaken Hezbollah's popular support base.[63]

Prime Minister Olmert was reportedly skeptical of attacks on infrastructure beyond bridges, fearing that such a move would have the opposite effect and unite the Lebanese around Hezbollah.[64] What exact instructions the Cabinet initially gave to the IDF regarding attacks on Hezbollah's headquarters and support base in south Beirut is unclear. Israeli ministers would later say that the Cabinet agreed that there would be no attacks on electrical power or water-related installations, a departure from previous Israeli practice in its 1996 campaign. This was a decision taken specifically to spare the civilian population the secondary effects of the loss of modern life support systems and avoid the negative political and international fallout associated with "attacks" on civilians.[65]

However Hezbollah was to be crushed, the mission had to be accomplished in such a way that it would not undermine larger political and strategic objectives for Israel—not just to buy additional security and increase international support for its existence and right to self-defense, but also to weaken Hezbollah's status in Lebanon and in the Arab world. Finally, as a component of a global "war" against terrorism, Israel's actions against Hezbollah sought concrete and physical achievements that were not at the same time undermined by a sense of victimization or immoral defeat that merely strengthened a future enemy.

Attack and Escalation

Though Israel was well aware of Hezbollah's buildup in southern Lebanon and even forecast that a military confrontation with Hezbollah was inevitable given the organization's acquisition of a more and more effective offensive arsenal, when Hezbollah attacked on 12 July, the operation seemed to have come as a surprise.[66] The day before Hezbollah's incursion, IDF chief Lt Gen Dan Halutz reportedly made a reservation to vacation with his family in northern Israel.[67]

On the day of the attack, Prime Minister Olmert maintained a regular schedule, ironically meeting with the family of another kidnapped soldier, Galid Shalit, and then meeting with Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi.[68]

At the local military level, three days before the Hezbollah attack, Maj Gen Udi Adam, commander of the IDF's Northern Command, lowered the alert level along the northern border. Israeli intelligence provided his command "no early warning, period," Adam says.[69] The commander of Division 91, the higher command for the ambushed patrol, also says Is-

raeli intelligence failed to provide him or his staff with early warning as to Hezbollah's plans to carry out the 12 July raid.[70] An official postwar review of the kidnapping incident concluded that the ambushed patrol operated as if it were "out on a trip rather than on an operative mission." The reserve unit evidently had not been given any proper orders in its entire three weeks of border duty.[71]

An Israeli air force F-16 pilot further describes his surprise on 12 July when, upon returning to base at about 10 a.m. from a routine training flight, he saw aircraft taking off to implement emergency procedures: "By the time I get out of the plane, I hear the roar of the heavy takeoffs . . . and then another roar, and another. There is something different in the sound of a combat takeoff with a full load of bombs: the takeoff is long, the planes are heavy, the afterburner is used longer—not the light and quick training takeoffs. Something is definitely happening."[72]

And though the 12 July operation was meticulously planned by Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah himself claims that he was surprised at the Israeli government's response to the kidnapping, indicating more Israeli improvisation than preparation.[73] After all, there had been other incidents along the border during 2005 and 2006, and as General Adam reminded the media on 12 July, the IDF had deflected them or dealt with them without escalating.[74]

Hezbollah political leaders and operatives in Beirut were also unaware of the operation, making no changes to their day-to-day security procedures or movements. Even after the kidnapping, Hezbollah political leaders had no sense or warning that Israel would respond as they did, particularly in Beirut.[75] The Lebanese government was unaware of Hezbollah's actions on 12 July and went about its business without any advance warning of the Hezbollah attack.[76] And once the attack unfolded, the Beirut government was vociferous in its position that it was neither responsible for Hezbollah's actions nor did it endorse them.[77]

On the second day of the conflict, after Hezbollah attacked Haifa, Israel escalated its attacks to include the runways at Rafiq Hariri International Airport and Hezbollah's Al-Manar television station in Beirut.[78] After Israel returned to the Beirut airport to attack fuel storage tanks on the evening of 13 July, it also attacked fuel storage tanks at the Jiyyeh electric power plant south of the capital. Finally, on the evening of 13 July, the IAF began attacks on Hezbollah headquarters and "security command" targets in the southern Shi'a neighborhoods of Beirut, beginning its campaign to eradicate the

Hezbollah-dominated areas of the Lebanese capital. "You wanted an open war, and we are heading for an open war," Hassan Nasrallah responded to the south Beirut attacks. "We are ready for it." Nasrallah also vowed that Israeli military action would never win the release of the two soldiers, saying that the two IDF soldiers had been moved to a safe place far from the border. Nasrallah further threatened that if Israel escalated, Hezbollah would respond strongly and that Israel "should be ready for surprises."

By the end of the first 24 hours, Hezbollah had fired 125 Katyushas into Israel. By 14 July, the number reached 185. On 14 July, 103 Hezbollah rockets were fired, followed by 100 on the 15th. Israel might have thought that its air attacks were having an impact when the number of rocket firings declined to 43 on 16 July and 92 on the 17th, but by 18 July, the number was again above 100, and there was little evidence, as Hezbollah mobilized in the south, that air attacks alone were having the effect of stemming the rocket fire into Israel. What is more, after the initial attack on Haifa on 13 July, Hezbollah continued its long-range attacks on Israeli cities, attacking Tiberias (25 miles from the Lebanese border) on 15 July, and the Galilee town of Afula (31 miles south of the Lebanese border) on 17 July. Afula was the furthest south a rocket fired from Lebanon had ever landed inside Israel. Hezbollah also hit Haifa on 16 July with an Iranian Fajr rocket, killing eight railroad workers and injuring another 50. Haifa and Tiberias were hit again on 17 July. Despite extensive Israeli bombing, Hezbollah had managed to fire more than 500 rockets in the first seven days.

Israel's initial ground operations against Hezbollah were limited to a halfhearted rescue attempt and commando and reconnaissance missions. By the end of the third day, IDF ground forces had crossed the border at a number of points from Ras al-Naqoura along the coast, all the way to al-Majidiyah north of the Golan Heights in the west, but these were all temporary incursions. Israeli armored vehicles entered approximately one km inside Lebanese territory, demolishing Hezbollah outposts, setting up cement block barriers, and exchanging fire with Hezbollah forces.[79]

It was not until 18 July—six days after the kidnapping—that Israeli ground forces made a major assault deep into Lebanese territory, initially focused on Maroun a-Ras as a stepping stone to its assault on the Hezbollah center at Bint Jbeil just to its north.

Reality Sets In

Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon were placed on full alert within minutes of the 12 July kidnapping as the organization implemented plans to continue rocket attacks into Israel and defend its forces in Lebanon. Hezbollah had carefully studied its terrain and the supporting transportation and communication systems, as well as Israeli capabilities and deployments, allowing it to sustain rocket fire under attack, concentrate forces at critical points, prepare optimum defenses, and streamline its logistical needs. From the border, where it was able to predict where Israel would cross, to the approaches into villages, where it was able to lay mines and explosives, to villages themselves, where it was able to establish firing positions and set booby traps, Hezbollah mounted an effective and economical defense.[80]

As the IDF attacked or made advances on the ground, most Hezbollah fighters withdrew from fixed border posts and prepared fire sites to positions closer to or inside villages and towns, where they either made use of prepared infrastructure or commandeered new civilian assets.[81] Organizationally, Hezbollah was also prepared to mount a stubborn "veneer" defense—wide and thin—and its forces and supplies were widely dispersed and organized to reinforce the weakest sectors. In just one village around Naqoura, a small fishing village on the Mediterranean coast just two km from the Israeli border, Hezbollah deployed 10–15 squads that could shuttle amongst various prepared defenses. In the rocky, uninhabited hillside running along the border nearby, Hezbollah had closed off civilian traffic for over three years, building a "formidable network of tunnels, bunkers and weapons depots" where fighters were able to survive over the month of pounding by Israeli aircraft and artillery.[82]

In the built-up areas and inside the villages, Hezbollah had the advantages of civilian cover against attack, time to prepare for any Israeli advance, and an urban setting from which to ambush IDF forces and conduct guerrilla warfare once Israeli ground forces advanced. Hezbollah prepared hundreds of firing positions on the outskirts of villages and later booby-trapped civilian houses and buildings where it assumed the IDF would operate.[83] As IDF forces approached Lebanese villages, they were met by both gunfire and antitank fire from inside civilian houses. Hezbollah also used short-range rockets and mortars to fire on IDF forces maneuvering in Lebanese territory and on IDF concentrations that had occupied southern villages.[84]

Hezbollah rocket-firing positions were predominantly set up along paved roads, enabling easy access from weapon stockpiles located inside the villages.[85] Even under Israeli air attack—and as ground forces advanced into Lebanon—Hezbollah managed to conduct extensive logistical activities, making use of the pre-positioned materiel as well as moving arms to supply the fighters, albeit in small quantities, which were all highly needed.[86] For instance, antitank missiles were moved around the south inside backpacks carried by Hezbollah operatives dressed in civilian clothes, often riding motorcycles and carrying white flags, according to Israeli intelligence.[87] Israeli intelligence also alleged that Hezbollah used ambulances and other rescue vehicles for cover in its movements. According to the IDF:

> During the war, Hezbollah made use of vehicles designed for humanitarian purposes, knowing they would not be targeted by the IDF. Thus, there were numerous incidents reported of the use of ambulances, Red Cross vehicles, and the Lebanese government's civilian defense vehicles to transfer operatives, arms and ammunition, and equipment. In other incidents, Hezbollah's civilian vehicles closely followed Red Cross and other humanitarian convoys to minimize risk.[88]

When the Israeli ground offensive finally began in earnest on 19 July, Israeli forces proceeded into Lebanon, mostly taking to the roads, moving slowly, and controlling territory only in a piecemeal fashion in southern Lebanon; Hezbollah seemed far more ready than the IDF.[89] With no established front and no clear line of separation between forces, the IDF faced fire—particularly deadly antitank fire—from all directions. IDF forces took refuge in abandoned Lebanese homes and buildings, becoming prey to the capable multikilometer-range antitank missiles. In the village of Debel, west of Bint Jbeil, Hezbollah fired on civilian structures that IDF reservists were using for shelter during daylight hours; nine Israeli soldiers from a demolition company were killed, and 31 more were wounded.[90] Antitank squads armed with advanced Kornet missiles were mobilized in the Froun-Ghandouriyeh area at the end of the war.[91] Division 162, which fought the battle of Wadi Saluki at the end of the war near these villages, suffered considerable casualties when it was ambushed by Hezbollah antitank squads.[92]

Israeli tanks entered the area southeast of Bint Jbeil and Maroun a-Ras on 19 July, and the first major ground battle raged at Maroun a-Ras through 24 July.[93] Hezbollah was able to properly read that Bint Jbeil was the ultimate target, and it reinforced the town with "dozens of skilled

operatives as well as Special Force operatives in sabotage, anti-tank, and antiaircraft warfare," according to Israeli intelligence.[94] Beginning on 19 July, ground exchanges also took place along the coast and around Marwaheen, where IDF tanks and bulldozers moved into Lebanese territory (though they retreated back into Israel on 21 July).[95] On 24 July, the frustrating and deadly battle of Bint Jbeil began, and on 30 July, the battle of Aiyt a-Shab opened a central front. The ground war slowly and rather ineffectively took on its own momentum, not relevant to stemming the continuing rocket attacks on Israel, while also building up domestic expectations of eventual success.

Israel would mount three more offensives before the end: opening a fourth eastern axis at Kfar Kila on 30 July, undertaking an expansion of ground operations after a Cabinet directive on 1 August, and then mounting a final drive for the Litani River after yet another Cabinet directive on 9 August. Thousands of IDF reservists were eventually called up for operations in southern Lebanon. By 9 August, IDF forces had made their way to Debel in the central sector (4.5 km from the border) and near Qantara in the east (7 km from the border). In the last battle to take place as the IDF drove for the Litani before the cease-fire, ground forces made it 12 km into Lebanon to Ghandouriyeh, a village astride the Wadi Saluki. When the cease-fire went into effect, the IDF occupied 16 pockets/sectors in southern Lebanon.[96]

The final Cabinet decision, nevertheless, came well after an internationally brokered cease-fire was already looming. The government of Lebanon pledged on 27 July that it would once again extend its authority over its territory in an effort to ensure that there would not be any weapons or military other than that of the Lebanese state. A seven-point Lebanese plan to expand the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and extend Lebanese army control into the south was introduced on 7 August. On 11 August, the UN Security Council unanimously approved UNSCR 1701 (2006), which additionally called for disarmament of Hezbollah. Lebanon, Hezbollah, and Israel all accepted the terms, and the cease-fire was to take effect at 8:00 a.m. local (0500 GMT) on 14 August.[97]

As the cease-fire loomed, both Israel and Hezbollah accelerated their strikes to cause maximum damage to the other. Hezbollah increased its rate of long-range rocket fire, culminating with 220 rockets launched into Israel on 13 August, its second highest daily total. Israel picked up the pace of its operations, expanding air attacks and nearly tripling the number of

troops in southern Lebanon in the final few days of the conflict. Israel, by all evidence, also employed a significant number of air- and ground-delivered cluster bombs in the last 72 hours of the campaign, ostensibly to stem the rocket attacks and cause havoc to movements should the cease-fire collapse, but also seemingly content to leave hundreds of thousands of unexploded bomblets to impede postwar civilian movements and recovery in the south—a reality that it should have anticipated given the record of US cluster bomb use and the IDF's selection of older weapons with higher dud rates.

From the beginning of the 2006 war, it is clear that the Israeli government was intent not to become embroiled in another ground occupation in southern Lebanon. Though there was hope on the part of many that a strong and extensive bombing campaign would eradicate Hezbollah's long-range threat to Israel, when Hezbollah showed itself to be more skilled and resilient than Israel anticipated, domestic pressures inside Israel mounted for an expansion of ground operations.

Some say that the ground forces themselves dawdled in anticipation that the 2006 war indeed could be won from the air, seeking to avoid the casualties that guerrilla operations and occupation would entail.[98] When ground forces were finally ordered into Lebanon on 19 July, there seemed to be great confusion with regard to missions and objectives; units were advanced and withdrawn, and even in the case of forces that went on the offensive, little momentum was maintained. The armor-heavy, road-bound conventional force proved unable to keep in contact with its Hezbollah opponents. Many observers claim that these missteps were due to political and high command indecision; that ground forces were "frozen in place," making them more vulnerable. But others point to a lack of preparedness and training, and a focus away from conventional combat (and the northern theater) by the IDF itself after the 2000 withdrawal.[99] The need to account for itself can be seen in its final deployments inside Lebanon. When the war was over, the IDF was deployed mainly in a series of hilltop locations, lacking control of surrounding territory and even lacking control of the terrain between forward positions and the Israeli border.[100]

The conventional description of the 2006 Hezbollah war is that having an IAF officer in charge of the General Staff[101] and naïve reliance on airpower by an inexperienced government resulted in Israeli failure.[102] The IAF, the arm of the Israeli military that had once destroyed whole air forces in a few days, not only proved unable to stop Hezbollah rocket strikes but

even to do enough damage to prevent Hezbollah's rapid recovery. The failure is not airpower's alone; Israeli intelligence and ground forces equally focused on stopping the rocket fire, but clearly Israel overestimated the purity of its intelligence and the efficacy of its strategy and technology and underestimated Hezbollah's skill and resilience.[103]

Airpower against Terrorism

Every modern war has a complicated and controversial narrative. Desert Storm was the affirmation of modern technology and precision airpower. Yet to some, the first Gulf War proved that "strategic" bombing and coercion do not work and that ground forces were ultimately needed to exact Iraq's capitulation, to "occupy territory," and to finish the job. The 1999 war over Kosovo was the first war "won" by airpower alone. But only, some argue, if one ignores that the threat of a ground war convinced Slobodan Milosevic to give in to NATO's demands. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan defied predictions of a Soviet-style quagmire and affirmed a new era where a small force leveraging special operations and airpower defeated a much larger enemy. That is, as long as one limits OEF to the time frame of the 2001 "victory" and ignores the long war that followed. Finally, Gulf War Two—Operation Iraqi Freedom—is and was the repudiation of "shock and awe" and the one that got away because of a dubious expectation of instant and uncomplicated victory, because of too few resources employed à la Afghanistan, and because of deficient postwar planning.[104]

The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah conflict hardly disappoints in competing narratives. Hezbollah labels its endurance and survival in the face of Israeli attack a "Divine Victory," stating that it is rearming and more powerful than ever—militarily and politically in Lebanese internal politics and in the overall Arab world.[105] The Israeli government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert equally asserts that the 2006 war was one of that country's greatest military and political victories ever. Olmert argues that Israel set Hezbollah back in armaments and capabilities, pushed it from the northern border, achieved a cease-fire to suit Israel's political interests, and established a geopolitical reordering in Lebanon and the "moderate" Arab world.[106]

Airpower in the Israeli narrative is labeled "brilliant." Supporters claim that some huge percentage of Hezbollah's medium- and long-range capabilities were destroyed and point out that the IAF was able to exact a heavy toll with almost zero losses. Even General Gantz, the IDF senior

army officer, says airpower "set an historic precedent for its ability to identify launchers, pinpoint their exact location and very quickly close the sensor-to-shooter loop."[107] Others argue that airpower, through its rapid response, strategic reach, and punishing might, also strengthened Israel's deterrent capability, demonstrating the heavy price that Israel could impose on any attacker.[108]

Arguing that Israel achieved what it set forth to achieve in the 2006 war, however, is a little like saying that the operation was successful but the patient died. The performance of airpower may have been superb, and the IDF may have indeed accomplished difficult internal transformational tasks under fire,[109] but in terms of Israel's objectives, the kidnapped Israeli soldiers were neither rescued nor released; Hezbollah rocket fire was never suppressed, not even its long-range fire; the extent of Israeli attacks evoked widespread condemnation; and Israeli ground forces were badly shaken and bogged down by a well-equipped and capable foe. Even General Halutz labels the war results "mediocre"[110] and admits that the IDF did not achieve its internal objectives.[111] Great damage may have been done to Hezbollah by Israeli bombardment—air, sea, and land—but nothing Israel did was able to undermine its basic coherence or deplete its forces. Barely a month after the cease-fire, Nasrallah claimed that Hezbollah still had at least 20,000 rockets.[112] In March 2007 Israeli intelligence concluded that "south Lebanon has not become a demilitarized zone free of terrorist organizations and their weapons, Hezbollah as an organization was not disarmed, the process of rehabilitating its military strength continues, and an effective embargo on smuggling arms from Syria to Lebanon has not been imposed."[113] The US Defense Intelligence Agency agreed, opining less than six months after the cease-fire, "The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) damaged some of Hezbollah's arsenal and many of its buildings, but Hezbollah's leadership remains unscathed and probably has already replenished its weapons stockpiles with Iranian and Syrian assistance."[114] No wonder then that General Gantz reflects the view of many philosophical Israelis that despite achievements claimed and actual, the overall conflict with Hezbollah will not be solved "without another round of battle."[115]

Outside of the Israeli government and General Staff, and certainly outside Israel, Hezbollah's postwar survival and strength alongside Lebanon's seeming destruction drives observers to almost universal agreement that the 2006 war was illegally executed by Israel with meager, if not counterproductive, military justification and extreme humanitarian effects. In August, Amnesty

International opined that Israel pursued a policy of "deliberate destruction of Lebanese civilian infrastructure," including commitment of "war crimes."[116] In September, Human Rights Watch said Israel made a "systematic failure to distinguish between combatants and civilians," questioning why so many civilian vehicles and homes had been targeted "despite the absence of military justification."[117] In November, the UN Commission of Inquiry cited "a significant pattern of excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force by IDF against Lebanese civilians and civilian objects,"[118] concluding that Israel's conduct demonstrated "an overall lack of respect for the cardinal principles regulating the conduct of armed conflict, most notably distinction, proportionality and precaution."[119]

Given Israel's reliance on high technology and precision-guided munitions, given its decisions to spare Lebanon's direct life support infrastructure, given its specific targeting decisions and internal process of legal review, given Israel's view of itself as law abiding and morally based, given the nature of the enemy's explicit and intentional use of civil society as a shield and its own commission of war crimes in attacking Israeli civilians, no wonder this narrative of Israeli illegality is deeply frustrating to many. Some even argue that Israel's problem is one of perceptions: that the 2006 war was itself a war of competing narratives and Israel failed to "win" the public relations battle because of poor information warfare techniques or practices, because it had to "tell the truth" while Hezbollah told lies, or that Israel "lost" because of media biases.[120]

But perhaps part of the problem is in the nature and narrative of air warfare itself. Here are the facts regarding the 2006 war: 1,200 or more Lebanese civilian deaths, 4,000 civilians injured; destruction of as many as 130,000 homes and apartments in over 130 villages and towns; the destruction of hundreds of Beirut buildings and the leveling of entire city blocks; 100 bridges downed; two dozen gas stations destroyed; and airports and ports attacked. Absent a decent explanation of what all these numbers really mean, or taken out of context or twisted to ignore Israel's care or where Hezbollah deployed its forces or how it fought, these isolated data points become any propagandist's tool. Whether it is the IDF's mechanically reciting how many "structures" it attacked daily and how many sorties it flew, or the news media's reporting civilian casualties and damage on the ground in the absence of Israel's compelling description of its dominant military effort (airpower), the context of Israel's choices, decision making, actions, and overall strategy was lost. Even Israeli com-

mentary promoting the IDF's achievements built upon the same mind-numbing narrative of meaningless destruction. For example, here is how one Israeli journalist describes the war's outcome:

> Two-thirds of Lebanon lies in ruins. Major infrastructure was knocked out of commission. Bases, depots, headquarters, banks and financial institutions were destroyed. Most of Hezbollah's command centers were reduced to rubble. A million people were driven from their homes, and a quarter of a million scrambled to leave the country. With statistics like these, Nasrallah needs a healthy dose of chutzpah to get up in front of a crowd of hundreds of thousands and pass himself off as a hero and a savior.[121]

Two-thirds of Lebanon? No wonder that the UN Commission of Inquiry "saw" a country "destroyed" when it visited Lebanon, stating that "housing, water facilities, schools, medical facilities, numerous mosques and churches, TV and radio transmission stations, historical, archaeological and cultural sites . . . suffered *massive damage* . . . [and that] agriculture and tourism were particularly hit."[122] (emphasis added)

No wonder as well that the commission could write that Lebanon's economic infrastructure was intentionally targeted, suggesting not only an Israeli intent to ruin Lebanon but also that everything that was damaged, no matter how slight or peripheral, was actually destroyed and intentionally so.[123] No wonder because in spite of Israel's soothing reassurances of compliance with the Geneva protocols and legality in focusing on the difficult Hezbollah military target, Israeli leaders also issued threats suggesting a concealed agenda and intention to destroy Lebanon as a country. "Lebanon is responsible and Lebanon will bear the consequences" of Hezbollah's actions, Prime Minister Olmert declared on the first day of the campaign.[124] Halutz warned that the Israeli assault would "turn back the clock in Lebanon by 20 years."[125] A high-ranking IAF officer told reporters that Halutz had ordered the military to destroy 10 buildings in Beirut in retaliation to every rocket strike on Haifa.[126]

Israel signaled from the very beginning of Operation Change of Direction—through repeated attacks on bridges, in attacks on Lebanon's airport and ports, in attacking "buildings" in south Beirut for 23 of 34 days of the conflict—that it had a secondary agenda, as Prime Minister Olmert referred to it, of exerting political "leverage" over Lebanon.[127] Israel on the one hand was carefully calibrating its attacks and seeking to minimize civilian harm in limited war to achieve not just military results but long-term political benefits, while on the other hand it was simultaneously

pursuing an intentionally punishing and destructive political campaign. Clearly Israel wanted to bring the war "home" to the Lebanese government and the people of Beirut. If Israel lost the war of narratives, it was not solely because Hezbollah hid among civilians, or even because Israel had a clumsy information campaign.

How then can we understand the Lebanon war beyond Israel's dual objectives, beyond its clumsiness, beyond Hezbollah's perfidy, and beyond an international community that was indeed predisposed toward being stacked up against Israel? "Nations fight in the real world, not in ones where they can set the rules for war or perceptual standards," Anthony Cordesman writes.[128]

In the real world, Israel fought against an opponent that not only defied the standards of conventional war making, but one that also proved to be sophisticated and prepared. Israel on some level understood Hezbollah's nature—something had to have sunk in with the selection of all of those civilian buildings and homes as Hezbollah assets—and yet Israel pursued a strategy to defeat Hezbollah in an old-fashioned and wrong-headed way.

Ultimately then, the characterization of the 2006 war as one of narratives or one big misunderstanding not only disobligates Israel of self-examination for its actual failures of conception and implementation, but also diverts Israel (and by extension, the United States) from the pressing task of getting beyond conventional military approaches to find a more effective way to "fight" terrorism.

An honest assessment of where Israel went wrong necessitates acknowledging from the beginning that the Israeli political leadership had many valid reasons to want to use the airpower tools associated with strategic attack and long-range strike. First, an "airpower"-centric approach best countered the enemy's strengths, particularly given how embedded Hezbollah was in Lebanese civil society and how much it had built up its basic capabilities north of the Litani River (and thus out of the reach of Israeli ground forces). Second, the existing conception of conventional ground combat, attrition, and occupation prevalent in the IDF was out of synch with either the nature of the enemy or the level of commitment Israeli leaders (and, in their view, the Israeli public) were willing to make. Third, the "airpower" decision was made easier by default due to the stark reality that the ground forces were not prepared to mount the very campaign they were promoting.

In his January 2007 letter of resignation to Prime Minister Olmert, Lt Gen Dan Halutz wrote: "One of the main things the [internal] investiga-

tions [of the 2006 war] taught us was that the military establishment is profoundly affected by long term processes. At times the effect is unnoticed and we are unaware of its full consequences. These processes affect the Israeli society in general and the capabilities of the military in particular."[129] What were those long-term processes Halutz referred to, and how had they influenced Israeli society, governmental decision making, and IDF strategy? Some were organizational and priorities based, focusing more effort on Israel's hunt for high-value terrorist targets and the small-unit actions associated with the Palestinian challenges in the West Bank and Gaza, with the ground forces division, particularly in the north, receiving fewer resources.[130] Others were doctrinal and conceptual, particularly in the embrace of an "effects based" operations mind-set and what IDF theorists call "cognitive" objectives rather than conventional approaches of attrition and "destroying" the enemy. Embrace of these long-term processes, some say, led to the "aerial arrogance" on the part of many senior IDF officers.[131]

To equate an effects-based approach with aerial arrogance is a mistake. But if one accepts that Israel had indeed adopted a new effects-based doctrine since 2000 to fight terrorism, the most important questions are how did the IDF implement it, and did it make the right choices? Like the United States in the global war on terrorism, Israeli leaders argue that they are fighting a "new" and different kind of enemy—a state within a state, a well-armed terrorist/guerrilla force shielded by the civilian population—and yet when the time for action came in 2006, the IDF designed the most conventional of wars built from the assumption that Hezbollah could be defeated, even eliminated, through some level of attrition and destruction. Somewhere in its recesses, Israel knew that Hezbollah was well armed and that it was a force with deep roots and enormous popular support in southern Lebanon, but it constantly intoned for domestic consumption and external propaganda that Hezbollah was weak, had no Lebanese support, and was and would lose. In short, Israel just could not seem to get away from seeing and then fighting Hezbollah in old ways.

In the last 24 hours of the campaign before the 14 August cease-fire, when the IAF attacked eight gas stations in southern Lebanon, pure punishment took over from an effects-based conception.[132] In the case of the gas stations and the blistering use of thousands of submunitions-dispensing weapons—"cluster bombs"—in the final 72 hours, some in Israel no doubt thought that Hezbollah's regeneration could be delayed and undermined;

or if the cease-fire collapsed, that the cumulative effect of depletion of resources and obstacles to movement would accrue military advantages for the IDF. The same kind of thinking must have been applied to the accumulation of destroyed roads and bridges throughout northern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, that somehow movements and imports were being slowed or even stopped, and that the IDF was directly benefiting.

This is the most conventional of approaches, with each individual object justified for its legality and military importance, almost divorced from the overall campaign objective and desired strategic outcome. The assumption is that if the target is meticulously attacked, if the unit is defeated, if another combatant is killed, a connection will magically and naturally be made to the broader political objectives of the war. Now Israeli political leaders and military types hail their success in eliminating Hezbollah's long-range rocket threat, killing more than 600 Hezbollah fighters, setting back Hezbollah's military capabilities and infrastructure "two years," dislodging Hezbollah from southern Lebanon, demonstrating that Israel is no longer hesitant to respond to individual provocations, and creating a high "price tag" for anyone who attacks Israel.

Though Hezbollah never "defeated" Israel on the battlefield, because of Israel's bifurcated and destructive campaign waged against the people and the nation of Lebanon, Hezbollah was able to win the hearts and minds of many. Hezbollah's narrative was not only that Lebanese civilians were hit while only a few of its fighters were killed, but also that it survived the best that Israel could throw at it, and that it (and not Beirut and not Arab governments) uniquely stood up to Israel and achieved victory. Hezbollah's political strengthening in the face of massive Israeli attack—and the celebrations that rippled through the Arab world that Israel was thwarted (just as the United States has been in Iraq)—came from their "conventional" defeat.

When Israel made the decision to respond to Hezbollah on 12 July, beyond the immediate attacks on the border observation posts and nearby Hezbollah fighters and activity, beyond even attacks on the fixed rocket infrastructure and the 34-minute operation against Hezbollah's long-range force (whatever it was), did anyone in the IDF or Israeli leadership really believe their own articulation that attacks on a handful of Litani and Zahrani River bridges—even key choke points—would prevent Hezbollah from evacuating or hiding the kidnapped soldiers? When Israel bombed Beirut International Airport in the first 24 hours with the public

justification that it was further impeding the export of the soldiers or the import of military materiel, did anyone in the command structure really believe that? Did anyone in the IDF or the Israeli government think that the public or the international community would believe and accept these contrived explanations?

A fair, non-antiairpower assessment of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war is that Israel, in recognition of limited war and fully aware of its pessimistic prospects in the local and international struggle for hearts and minds, chose to just destroy as much as it could in as short a period of time as possible to at least set Hezbollah back and buy time for its security. Since security is the ultimate objective, at some point someone should have said "enough already" for what was being achieved. Someone should have said—and even recognized—that the accumulation of buildings and bridges and destroyed homes in villages in the south and in the Bekaa after awhile begins to tell a different story; and that story, if it is not the intent, is one to be avoided. That narrative is that "we" in the West, with all of our intelligence, drones, and technological and conventional military superiority, do everything with complete clarity and intention; that we are the ones who have no regard for civil society or civilians, particularly Muslims: we even destroy their gas stations. Given that "they" do not have F-16s to attack us with, they are reduced to using rockets, suicide bombers, or airliners to strike back.

There is an argument to be made that probably no matter what Israel bombed, the Jewish state would have still provoked the hatred of Hezbollah sympathizers and much of the Lebanese and Arab world. But Israel could also have, and should have, pursued a different approach. Since Israel was not going to "win" the war against Hezbollah through statistical accumulation and was not going to fight Hezbollah to some total war victory, an equal objective had to be not only creating a stronger deterrent but also creating some degree of sympathy and support for Israel's right to defend itself, even if in doing so, Israel had to attack another nation. Had Israel limited its attacks as much as possible to Hezbollah, concentrated its resources on military forces and capabilities in the south and the Bekaa, pursued a campaign more attuned to emerging humanitarian and international norms regarding the use of cluster bombs, shown greater transparency in describing what it was doing and the intelligence basis for its decisions, and fought a war truer to its own political intuition about what was possible in the first place with an organization like Hezbollah, Israel might

have—might have—bought more time and engendered greater sympathy and support, thus not only achieving more militarily, but also in the fundamental long-term objective of counterterrorism: not creating even more enemies tomorrow.

The "failure" of airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war was not that it promised too much or that it did not deliver. It was instead a grand strategic failure in the application of force against terrorism. The war demonstrates and justifies a clear transition needed from conventional to wholly new modes of warfare required for counterterrorism in the future. Israel certainly failed to "tell" its airpower (and military) story effectively. But to do so would have demanded that it understood the very flexibility of the instrument it was wielding, and that it had reconciled its competing impulses to seek "effects" while also exacting punishment that undermined its very agility. The failure then is that an instrument that has now been proven uniquely discriminating and reliable remains not only haunted by decades-old images of inhumanity, but also that it is held back and undermined by archaic and false conceptions of ground war preeminence and gentleness. SSQ

Notes

1. Richard Pendlebury, "Southern Beirut: Only the Dead or Insane Remain," *Daily Mail* (UK), 20 July 2006. See also Nick Parker, "Tour of Terror in Beirut," *Sun* (UK), 26 July 2006, http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0.,2.2006330627.00.html: "The scale of the destruction was truly incredible. One bunker buster seemed to have wiped out at least four nine storey [*sic*] blocks in a high rise estate. Only a 30 ft. pile of smoking concrete remained with layers of furniture, clothes and belongings squashed between collapsed floors. The muffled shriek of a car alarm in a vehicle entombed beneath the smashed buildings filled the smoky air. Curtains waved like banners from the broken windows of blackened apartment blocks as far as the eye could see."

2. United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (For the period from 21 January 2006 to 18 July 2006)," S/2006/560, 21 July 2006; and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli General Says 'This Is War;' Pledges 'Forceful' Response to Lebanon," live news conference with Maj Gen Udi Adam, commander of the IDF's Northern Command, site unknown, on Israeli Channel 2 TV on 12 July, 1512 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). See also Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), "IDF Spokesman: Hezbollah Attack on Northern Border and IDF Response," 12 July 2006, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terrorism+from+Lebanon+Hizbullah/Hizbullah+attack+on+northern+border+and+IDF+response+12-Jul-2006.htm; IDF, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC) at the Center for Special Studies (CSS), "Hezbollah's Use of Lebanese Civilians as Human Shields: The Extensive Military Infrastructure Positioned and Hidden in Populated Areas. Part Three: Israel Population Centers

as Targets for Hezbollah Rocket Fire," November 2006, 150–ff; Grigory Asmolov, "We Are Ready for the Next War," Kommersant (Russia), 9 November 2006, http://www.kommersant.com/p719977/r_527/Israel_Lebanon_Syria_Hizballah/; Yaakov Katz, "Eyeballing different Lebanese at the Kidnapping Site," *Jerusalem Post*, 10 December 2006, http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1164881865641&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull; Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), "Two Projectiles Fired from Lebanon Land in Northern Israel," 12 July 2006, 0712 [GMT]; BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israel Bombs Lebanese Villages, Hezbollah Shells Targets—TV," reporting Al-Arabiya TV in Arabic, 12 July 2006, 0718 GMT; Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), "Two Projectiles Fired from Lebanon Land in Northern Israel," 12 July 2006, 0722 [GMT]; and Reuters (Beirut), "UPDATE 3-Hezbollah Says Seizes Israeli Soldiers in Border Raid (Recasts with Hezbollah Saying Captured Israeli Soldier)," 12 July 2006, 6:32:39 a.m. (0932 GMT).

3. "Fighting on Two Fronts," *Jerusalem Post*, 13 July 2006, 1.

4. An eighth Israeli soldier was later killed on the ground inside Lebanon in the afternoon. The eight soldiers killed made up the single highest number of Israeli military casualties since the IDF's offensive in Jenin on 9 April 2002, which left 14 soldiers dead. The Israeli press reported that "dozens" of ground troops entered southwestern Lebanon on 12 July. See also MFA, "IDF Spokesman: Hezbollah Attack on Northern Border and IDF Response."

5. Associated Press (AP) Beirut, "Hezbollah and Israeli Forces Clash across the Border in Southern Lebanon," 12 July 2006, 0735 GMT; AP, "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon as Hezbollah TV Announces Capture of Two Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 0813 GMT.

6. "Operation True Promise" had as its declared aim obtaining the release of Lebanese and other Arab prisoners held in Israel by exchanging them for captured Israeli soldiers—as "promised" by Nasrallah.

7. A written statement by Hezbollah issued Wednesday morning said: "Implementing our promise to release the Arab prisoners in Israeli jails, our strugglers have captured at 9:05 am (0605 GMT) two Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon. . . . The two soldiers have already been moved to a safe place." See also AP (Gaza City), "Nine Palestinians Killed in Israeli Airstrike [*sic*], Hezbollah Claims to Kidnap Two Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 0920 GMT; and AP (Beirut), "Hezbollah Captures Two Israeli Soldiers, Sparking Israeli Bombardment in South Lebanon," 12 July 2006, 1546 GMT.

8. AP (Sam F. Ghattas, Beirut), "Israel Bombs Southern Lebanon after Hezbollah Fighters Snatch 2 Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1948 GMT; and United Press International (UPI), Beirut, "Analysis: Iran, Syria Use Lebanese Militia," 12 July 2006, 1646 GMT.

9. DPA, "Israeli Troops Enter Lebanon in Hunt after Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1050 GMT; and AP (Beirut), "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon as Hezbollah Announces Capture of Two Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1435 GMT.

10. UN, identical letters dated 17 July 2006 from the chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the secretary-general and the president of the Security Council, A/60/942–S/2006/531, 17 July 2006.

11. IDF, "Attacks on Israel from Lebanese Territory," Wednesday, 12 July 2006, 1202 GMT, http://www1.idf.il/DOVER/site/mainpage.asp?sl=EN&id=7&docid=54183.EN.

12. AP, "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon as Hezbollah TV Announces Capture of Two Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 0813 GMT; and Reuters (Beirut), "UPDATE 3—Hezbollah Says Seizes Israeli Soldiers in Border Raid (Recasts with Hezbollah Saying Captured Israeli Soldier)," 12 July 2006, 6:32:39 AM (0932 GMT). Israel confirmed that it was attacking "a number of bridges and roads . . . in order to prevent Hezbollah from transferring the abducted soldiers" and

also targeting "Hezbollah bases"; and MFA, "IDF Spokesman: Hezbollah Attack on Northern Border and IDF Response."

13. AP (Beirut), "Hezbollah Captures Two Israeli Soldiers, Sparking Israeli Bombardment in South Lebanon," 12 July 2006, 1546 GMT; and Yaakov Katz, Herb Keinon, and JPost Staff, "Eight IDF Soldiers Killed, 2 Kidnapped on Northern Frontier," *Jerusalem Post*, 13 July 2006, 1, http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1150885976658&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull. "Lebanon will bear the consequences of its actions," Olmert said. AP (Beirut), "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon." For the text of Olmert's initial statement, see also http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2006/PM+Olmert+Lebanon+is+responsible+and+will+bear+the+consequences+12-Jul-2006.htm. Israeli justice minister Haim Ramon said, "The Lebanese government, which allowed Hezbollah to commit an act of war against Israel, will pay a heavy price. The rules of the game have changed;" and Agence France-Presse (AFP) Beirut, "Israel Bombs Beirut Airport, 27 Killed in Raids," 13 July 2006, 0614 GMT.

14. CBS News, "Israel Bombs Foreign Ministry in Gaza," 12 July 2006; Donald Macintyre, "Israel Launches Ferocious Assault on Lebanon after Capture of Troops," *Independent* (United Kingdom [UK]), 13 July 2006, 4; and AP (Beirut), "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon as Hezbollah Announces Capture of Two Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1435 GMT.

15. Ynetnews, "Annan Condemns Israel Attack in Lebanon," Ynetnews.com, 12 July 2006, 18:03, http://www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3274607,00.html.

16. Anthony Shadid, "Inside Hezbollah, Big Miscalculations; Militia Leaders Caught Off Guard by Scope of Israel's Response in War," *Washington Post*, 8 October 2006, A1.

17. BBC, "Hezbollah Warns Israel over Raids," 12 July 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5173078.stm. See also AP (Sam F. Ghattas, Beirut), "Israel Bombs Southern Lebanon after Hezbollah Fighters Snatch 2 Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1948 GMT.

18. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli General Says 'This Is War.' "

19. Ibid. See also Nicholas Blanford, Ian MacKinnon, and Stephen Farrell, "How Israel Was Pulled Back into the Peril of Lebanon," *Times* (London), 13 July 2006, 4.

20. Office of the Prime Minister, transcript, "PM Olmert's Remarks at His Press Conference with Japanese PM Junichiro Koizum," 12 July 2006.

21. Israel, Cabinet Communiqué, 12 July 2006, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2006/Special+Cabinet+Communique+Hizbullah+attack+12-Jul-2006.htm. See also AP (Ravi Nessman, Jerusalem), "Israeli Troops Raid Lebanon after Islamic Militants Capture Two Soldiers in Cross-Border Raid," 12 July 2006, 2227 GMT.

22. One Hezbollah fighter was shot and killed trying to infiltrate the IDF's Oranit outpost, and another was killed trying to infiltrate the Biranit base. AP (Ghattas), "Israel Bombs Southern Lebanon"; "Fighting on Two Fronts," *Jerusalem Post*, 13 July 2006, 1; and MFA, "IDF Spokesman: Hezbollah Attack on Northern Border and IDF Response."

23. DPA (Beirut/Tel Aviv), "7TH LEAD: Israel Strikes Beirut Airport, Suburbs; At Least 31 Killed," 13 July 2006, 1004 GMT.

24. MFA, "IDF Spokesman: Hezbollah Attack on Northern Border and IDF Response." Lebanese "security officials" also said that a Palestinian base 10 miles south of Beirut was bombed; and Chris McGreal in Jerusalem, "Capture of Soldiers Was 'Act of War' Says Israel," *Guardian* (UK) 13 July 2006, http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1819123,00.html.

25. According to the author's research, the bridges attacked on 12 July included the Damour old bridge, south of Beirut; the old and new bridges over the Zahrani, south of Sidon; the coastal Qasimiyeh main bridge, north of Tyre; the coastal Awali and Wadi al-Zaynah bridges, north of Sidon; the Tayr Filsay-al-Zrariyeh bridge, between Tyre and Nabatiyeh; the al-Mahmoudiyeh/

Dimashqiyeh bridge, near Marjeyoun; and the al-Qa'qa'iyah al-Jisr bridge, over the Zahrani River in Nabatiyeh. According to the AP, some bridges were attacked several times to ensure they were destroyed to cut off movement between the south and the rest of the country. AP (Beirut), "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon as Hezbollah Announces Capture of Two Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1435 GMT; and AP (Sam F. Ghattas, Beirut), "Israel Bombs Southern Lebanon after Hezbollah Fighters Snatch 2 Israeli Soldiers," 12 July 2006, 1948 GMT.

26. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli Officials Vow to Remove Hezbollah from Border," Voice of Israel, Jerusalem, in Hebrew, 13 July 2006, 0905 GMT.

27. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli General Says 'This is War.'" See also Blanford et al., "How Israel Was Pulled Back into the Peril of Lebanon."

28. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israel Air Force Bombs Beirut Airport, Isolates South Lebanon [Studio talk between correspondent Miki Gurdus and Ya'aqov Ahime'ir—Live]," 13 July 2006, excerpt from report by Israeli radio on 13 July, 0405 GMT.

29. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli Officials Vow to Remove Hezbollah from Border."

30. Information provided to the author by the Lebanese army and by the author's own observations.

31. AFP (Jerusalem), "Israel Bombed Beirut Airport to Halt Hezbollah Arms: Army," 13 July 2006, 0510 GMT.

32. Japan Economic Newswire, "Israeli Bombs Beirut Airport, Imposes Sea, Air Blockade," 13 July 2006, 1116 GMT.

33. For reporting on a variety of numbers, see DPA, "2ND ROUNDUP: Israel Strikes Beirut Airport, Suburbs; Over 40 killed," 13 July 2006, 1438 GMT; AFP (Jihad Siqlawa, Tyre, Lebanon), "Gruesome Scenes after Israeli Air Raids on South Lebanon," 13 July 2006, 1158 GMT; AFP (Beirut), "Israel Strikes Lebanon over Seized Soldiers, Dozens Killed," 13 July 2006, 1133 GMT; and DPA (Beirut/Tel Aviv), "7TH LEAD: Israel Strikes Beirut Airport, Suburbs; At Least 31 Killed," 13 July 2006, 1004 GMT. See also Reuters (Beirut), "Israel Kills 52 Civilians, Including More Than 15 Children, in Lebanon," 13 July 2006, http://www.dawn.com/2006/07/13/welcome.htm; and DPA (Beirut/Tel Aviv), "5TH LEAD: Israeli Airstrikes [*sic*] Hit Beirut Airport, Suburbs; 27 Killed," 13 July 2006, 0542 GMT; Reuters, "Chronology—Six Months of Rising Mideast Tensions," 13 July 2006, 09:44:18; *Daily Star* (Lebanon) July War 2006 Timeline, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/July_War06.asp; and BBC News, "Day-by-Day: Lebanon Crisis—Week One," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5179434.stm. After the initial strikes of 12 July, the news media in Lebanon reported only two Lebanese civilians killed. AP (Jerusalem, Ravi Nessman), "Israeli Cabinet Approves Strikes in Lebanon after Hezbollah Captures Two Soldiers in Raid," 13 July 2006, 0354 GMT.

34. AFP (Jihad Siqlawa, Tyre, Lebanon), "Gruesome Scenes after Israeli Air Raids on South Lebanon," 13 July 2006, 1158 GMT.

35. DPA (Beirut/Tel Aviv), "5TH LEAD: Israeli Airstrikes Hit Beirut Airport."

36. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli Officials Vow to Remove Hezbollah from Border."

37. 6 AFP (Beirut), "28 Killed as Israel Pounds Lebanon in Soldier Crisis," 13 July 2006, 0851 GMT; AFP (Beirut), "Israel Strikes Lebanon over Seized Soldiers, Dozens Killed," 13 July 2006, 1133 GMT; and AFP (Beirut), "Dozens Killed as Israel Bombs Lebanon over Seized Soldiers," 13 July 2006, 0203 GMT. "This is a disproportionate response to what has happened and if both sides are going to drive each other into a tight corner then I think that all this will develop in a very dramatic and tragic way," the Russian news agency Interfax quoted Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as saying. "We have the impression that this is a disproportionate and dangerous reaction in view of the consequences it could have," Italian foreign minister Massimo D'Alema said.

38. AFP (Beirut), "Dozens Killed as Israel Bombs Lebanon," 13 July 2006, 2258 GMT.

39. Amnesty International, "Israel/Lebanon: End Immediately Attacks against Civilians," press release, 13 July 2006.

40. An electrical power station was reported attacked in Wadi Jilo east of Tyre (See Xinhua News Service, "Israeli Forces, Hizbollah [*sic*] Clash, Two Israeli Soldiers Feared Kidnapped," 12 July 2006; and Bahrain News Agency [Al-Arabiya TV, Dubai, in Arabic], "Two Civilians Killed in South Lebanon," 12 July 2006, 1351 GMT) but there was no such attack.

41. Xinhua General News Service (Beirut), "Update: Israeli Warplanes Bomb Beirut Airport," 13 July 2006, 0301 GMT.

42. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israel Air Force Bombs Beirut Airport." See also BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "(Correction) Israel Bombs Beirut Airport; Twenty-six Lebanese Killed—Al-Jazeera," 13 July 2006, 0420 GMT. Initial reports stated that Al-Jazeera reported 26 killed at the airport. The screen caption actually read: "Al-Jazeera's correspondent: 26 Lebanese civilians were killed and the runway of Beirut Airport was destroyed in an Israeli bombardment."

43. AFP (Beirut), "Israeli Aircraft Bomb Beirut International Airport," 13 July 2006, 0418 GMT; and AP (Sam F. Ghattas, Beirut), "Israel Attacks Beirut International Airport Runways, Airport Closed; Civilians Killed in South Lebanon," 13 July 2006, 0522 GMT.

44. UPI (Jerusalem), "Hezbollah, Israel Trade Bombing Threats," 13 July 2006, 1036 GMT.

45. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli Officials Vow to Remove Hezbollah from Border."

46. Stephen Farrell, "Our Aim Is to Win—Nothing Is Safe, Israeli Chiefs Declare," *Times* (UK), 14 July 2006, 1.

47. "Interview with Silvan Shalom, Former Israeli Finance Minister and Member of the Knesset's Subcommittee for Intelligence and Secret Services, Discussing the Need to Act Decisively in Damascus and Beirut Following Hezbollah's Attack on Northern Israel (IBA Reshet Bet Radio, 12:44 (GMT+3)," Federal News Service, 13 July 2006, 0944 GMT.

48. AP (Nahariya, Israel), "Rockets Hit Northern City of Haifa, Causing No Injuries," 13 July 2006, 1740 GMT.

49. AFP (Beirut), "Hezbollah Denies Firing Rockets on Israel's Haifa," 13 July 2006, 1752 GMT.

50. Transcript of interview with Hassan Nasrallah on Al-Jazeera, 20 July 2006.

51. AP (Beirut, Sam F. Ghattas), "Israel Blasts Beirut's Airport as Guerilla Rockets Hit Israel's Third Largest City in Escalating Battle," 13 July 2006, 1943 GMT.

52. DPA, "4TH ROUNDUP: Israel Strikes Beirut Airport, Rockets Land in Haifa," 13 July 2006, 2110 GMT.

53. Information provided by the IDF.

54. AP (Ghattas), "Israel Bombs Southern Lebanon."

55. Israeli MFA, Cabinet Communiqué, 12 July 2006.

56. Background interviews with Israeli government spokesmen and participants, September 2006. The shrewd military observer Anthony Cordesman agrees, writing that the IDF had an "understanding that [Hezbollah] could not be destroyed as a military force and would continue to be a major political actor in Lebanon." Anthony H. Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons' of the Israeli-Hezbollah War," Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), working draft, 17 August 2006. Lt Gen Dan Halutz, the IDF chief of staff, says that three options were discussed: "We go for Hezbollah alone; we go for Hezbollah and Lebanon; or for Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria. I believed that we should go for the second option, Hezbollah and Lebanon. I was opposed to the third option: not to attack Syria because of the kidnapping

of the two soldiers." Nahum Barnea and Shimon Schiffer, "What Would Halutz Say," *Yediot Aharonot* (Tel Aviv), 25 August 2006.

57. *UNSCR 1559*, 2 September 2004. The resolution called for the withdrawal of all remaining foreign forces from Lebanon; the "disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias"; and extension of Lebanese government control over southern Lebanon.

58. "We have no intention of permitting Hezbollah to redeploy along the international border in southern Lebanon," Defense Minister Amir Peretz told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on 13 July. "I state this unequivocally. The Lebanese Army should operate there and the Lebanese government is the only party that will be allowed to deploy forces along the border. If the Lebanese government refrains from deploying its forces, as is expected from a sovereign government, then we will not allow Hezbollah to deploy along Israel's border fences." BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli Officials Vow to Remove Hezbollah."

59. Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons,'" 3.

60. "Israel's Olmert Talks on Lebanon War, Iran, Prisoner Swap, Qadima Party Survival," interview with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in his Jerusalem office by Herb Keinon and David Horovitz, n.d.; and "I Had No Illusions about This Job," *Jerusalem Post*, 29 September 2006.

61. "Interview: Maj Gen Benjamin Gantz, Commander, Israel Defense Forces' Army Headquarters," *Defense News*, August 2006, 38. Some media reports say Halutz told the Cabinet that the IDF would require six to eight weeks, but this is not confirmed by Israeli officials, even those critical of Halutz.

62. Barnea and Schiffer, "What Would Halutz Say."

63. Report by Israel's Channel 10 television; and DPA, "Israel Retaliates with Lebanon Attacks; Gaza Targeted," 13 July 2006, 12:54 a.m. EST.

64. Makovsky and White, "Lessons and Implications," 13.

65. Senior Israeli government official and cabinet member, background interview by author, September 2006.

66. Military intelligence had issued a "strategic warning" in December 2005 predicting Hezbollah operations on the northern border, including the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers and rocket attacks on Haifa. The assessment, according to *Haaretz*, warned that Israel would face a considerable challenge because Hezbollah was a "well-established guerrilla force equipped with advanced anti-tank weapons and well-entrenched in southern Lebanon's nature preserves." Ari Shavit, "Six Months of Failures," *Haaretz*, 17 November 2006.

67. Yaakov Katz, "IDF Report Card," *Jerusalem Post Magazine*. There is, nonetheless, one significant contradiction to this information: claims that Halutz also sold his stock portfolio on 12 July. See Makovsky and White, "Lessons and Implications," 23.

68. Galid Shalit was kidnapped on the Gaza border on 25 June 2006. AP (Jerusalem), "Japan's Koizumi Urges Israel to Show Restraint, Not Seek 'Eye for Eye,' " 12 July 2006, 1146 GMT. "I respect his decision to meet with me at such a time," Koizumi said of Olmert after the meeting. "Israel's crisis management is very solid."

69. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli General Says 'This Is War.' "

70. Nir Hasson, "Gal Hirsch: MI Warning Would Have Prevented Soldiers' Abduction," *Haaretz*, 15 November 2006. Though Israeli intelligence may have known more, no specific warning was transmitted to those who needed it. *Haaretz* also reported that Israeli intelligence tipped off Division 91 at 2 a.m. on 12 July that the border fence had been cut and some 20 Hezbollah fighters had infiltrated into Israel. Amir Oren, "Analysis: In Lebanon, Government Hamstrung Troubled Division," *Haaretz*, 15 October 2006, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/774974.html.

71. Hanan Greenberg, "Almog: Kidnappings Could Have Been Avoided," Ynetnews.com, 12 November 2006, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3327332,00.html.

72. "In the Cockpit, by MAJOR 'Y,' " *Jerusalem Post*, 18 July 2006, 1524 (updated 19 July 2006, 0819), http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1150886035223&pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull.

73. Transcript, interview with Hassan Nasrallah on Al-Jazeera, 20 July 2006; and transcript, interview with Hassan Nasrallah on Lebanese NTV, 27 August 2006.

74. BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Israeli General Says 'This Is War.' " The kidnapping of three soldiers in 2000, as well as the attempted kidnapping in December 2005, all went unanswered by Israel. Hezbollah was also allowed to maintain outposts on the northern border through July 2006. The turning of the other cheek was referred to in Israel as the "Zimmer Policy": Israel would tolerate Hezbollah as long as the *zimmers* (rooms) and hotels in the North were full. Katz, "IDF Report Card."

75. Shadid, "Inside Hezbollah," A1.

76. In mid-2005, UNIFIL commander Maj Gen Alain Pellegrini was reportedly told by a senior IDF officer during a meeting in Jerusalem that if Hezbollah staged another kidnapping, the Israelis would "burn Beirut." Pellegrini says he relayed the warning to the Lebanese government. See Nicholas Blanford, "Deconstructing Hizbullah's Surprise Military Prowess," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 18, no. 11 (November 2006): 20–27.

77. The Lebanese prime minister stated on 15 July that "the Lebanese government announced from the first instance when the events broke, that it had no prior knowledge of what happened. Nor did it endorse the operation carried out by Hezbollah, which led to the abduction of the two Israeli soldiers." Address to the Lebanese people by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, 15 July 2006.

78. Two Lebanese military airfields were also attacked. A handful of television and radio transmission and relay stations in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley were also attacked, but not in any methodical way.

79. UNIFIL press release PR02, 18 July 2006.

80. Shadid, "Inside Hezbollah," A1; and IDF, ITIC/CSS, pt. 1, 46.

81. Ibid.

82. Blanford, "Hizbullah [*sic*] and the IDF."

83. IDF, ITIC/CSS, pt. 1, 49.

84. Ibid., 50.

85. Ibid.

86. IDF, ITIC/CSS, pt. 2, 79.

87. Ibid., 88.

88. IDF, ITIC/CSS, pt. 1, 45.

89. Along some parts of the border, for instance, IDF forces mounted temporary ground incursions through 20 July, withdrawing to Israel by nightfall. On 19 July UNIFIL reported, "Two IDF ground incursions inside Lebanese territory were reported today. In the early morning, six tanks, one bulldozer, and two graders moved into the area south of the village of Alma Ash Shab, close to the Mediterranean coast, and withdrew to the Israeli side after a couple of hours." UNIFIL press release PR03, 19 July 2006.

90. Josh Brannon and jpost.com staff, "Halutz Slammed for Promoting Generals," *Jerusalem Post*, 30 October 2006, http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1161811237367&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull.

91. IDF, ITIC/CSS, pt. 2, 91–92.

92. Amos Harel and Gideon Alon, "Defense Sources: Winograd War Probe to Last at Least a Year," *Haaretz*, 23 October 2006; and Brannon et al., "Halutz Slammed for Promoting Generals."

93. UNIFIL press release PR03, 19 July 2006; and UNIFIL press release PR04, 20 July 2006.

94. IDF, ITIC/CSS, pt. 2, 78. As many as 150 civilian-clothed Hezbollah fighters concentrated in Bint Jbeil for the 25–26 July battle, maintaining a low profile and blending in with the local population.

95. UNIFIL press release PR04, 20 July 2006. UNIFIL had observed Hezbollah firing rockets from the vicinity of Marwaheen on 16–17 July. UNIFIL press release PR01, 17 July 2006.

96. UN, *Report of the Secretary-General*. According to Israeli and UN records, this included Dhaira, Majdal Zoun, Marwaheen, Rajmin, Shama, Shiheen, and Tayr Harfa, near the coast; Aiyt a-Shab, Bint Jbeil, Maroun a-Ras, Ramiya, and Yaroun, in the central sector; Froun and Ghandouriyeh, in the interior; and al-Adayseh, Blida, Deir Mimas, Houla, Kfar Kila, Mais al-Jabel, Markaba, Muhaybib, Rab al-Thalathine, Sarda, and Taybeh, in the east.

97. Lebanese army units began deploying to southern Lebanon on 17 August. The blockade was lifted on 8 September. By 1 October, the IDF had withdrawn from Lebanon.

98. Abraham Rabinovich, "Retired Israeli Generals Vent," *Washington Times*, 27 September 2006, http://washingtontimes.com/world/20060926-105117-2517r.htm.

99. As postwar reviews showed, Division 91 and Northern Command ground forces were not prepared on 12 July to lead any kind of instant ground retaliation or to assume responsibility for another protracted war and occupation.

100. As one observer says, "On the first day of the cease-fire, it was possible to reach Bint Jbeil and Aitta Shaab [Aiyt a-Shab] in the western sector of the border district—which lay behind the IDF's frontline positions in Haddatha, Rashaf and Yatar—without even seeing a single IDF soldier." Blanford, "Hizbullah [*sic*] and the IDF."

101. Halutz, a fighter pilot who shot down five Arab planes in the Yom Kippur War in 1973, was the first IAF officer ever appointed head of the IDF. He was selected by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

102. See, for example, Shai Feldman, "The Hezbollah-Israel War: A Preliminary Assessment," Middle East Brief, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, September 2006: "By the end of the first week of fighting, it had become clear that suppressing Hezbollah's attacks exclusively through the use of airpower would not be possible."

103. The commander of the IDF army headquarters, Maj Gen Benjamin Gantz, said that, "Here we had an enemy armed with the latest weaponry and technology; learned our air operations and our methods of fighting; and mastered the principles of stealth. He burrowed down and concealed himself, and this was a tremendous advantage that we gradually learned to overcome in the course of fighting." *Defense News*, August 2006, 38.

104. The author has weighed in himself on these debates. See, for example, William M. Arkin, "Baghdad: The Urban Sanctuary in Desert Storm?" *Airpower Journal*, Spring 1997; "Desert Fox: The Difference Was in the Details," *Washington Post*, 17 January 1999, B1; Human Rights Watch, "Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign," February 2000 (written by the author); "Challenge to the '15,000-Foot Myth' Consumes Air Force Planners," *Defense Daily*, 2 March 2000; "Smart War, Dumb Targeting?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May–June 2000; and "Air Heads: Misperceptions and Rivalries Obscure Air Power's Potential," *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2006.

105. See, for example, transcript, Hassan Nasrallah speech in south Beirut, aired on Al-Manar TV, 16 February 2007.

106. Prime Minister Olmert said in September 2006 interviews that the war "was an unvarnished success," insisting that UNSCR 1701, which brought about the cease-fire and called for the disarming of Hezbollah, was a codification of Israel's greatest military and political victory. Caroline Glick, "Column One: The World According to Olmert," *Jerusalem Post*, 28 September 2006, http://www

.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1159193338867&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull. Olmert said in another September 2006 interview ("Israel's Olmert Talks on Lebanon War"; and "I Had No Illusions about This Job"): "This is the first time in a war between Israel and Arabs that . . . a war ends up not with a cease-fire imposed on us, against us, but with a cease-fire imposed by us to suit our political interest. This is what happened with [a vote of] 15-0 at the UN Security Council, without one word of criticism on Israel after fighting for 33 days against a Muslim society, when a large part of the world complained that Israel was destroying all of Lebanon, and that this was disproportionate and what not. . . I think this was a very smart, subtle and sophisticated use—proportionally—of the military power together with the political power to achieve what we set forth to achieve . . . including a change in the entire political make-up in Lebanon, which is on the way, and a change in the posture of moderate Arab countries against the Shi'ites in Lebanon, which is an outcome of this war."

107. "Interview: Maj Gen Benjamin Gantz," 38.

108. There are many different views on this question of deterrence. Some argue that attacks on Hezbollah and Lebanon weakened, not reinforced Israel's overall deterrence of the nonstate, Arab, and Iranian threat; weakened support for Israel in Europe and elsewhere; and stimulated a new wave of support for fighting Israel. Finally, there are those who argue that it will be difficult for Israel to prevent its "mismanagement" of the campaign against Hezbollah from damaging its deterrent profile. Feldman, "The Hezbollah-Israel War."

109. Though not the subject of this study, the IDF did achieve a number of "firsts" in the campaign, such as digitizing its ground forces on-the-fly after the campaign began, refining its "sensor to shooter" capabilities as the war progressed, and applying many innovations incorporating unmanned vehicles. Some systems were used for the first time (e.g., MLRS) and others performed admirably (e.g., aircraft and PGMs), but talk about not being able to see the forest for the trees!

110. JPost.com staff, "Halutz: 'War Results Mediocre, IDF Far from That'," *Jerusalem Post*, 1 October 2006, http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1159193351994&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull.

111. AP (Jerusalem), "Israeli Army Chief Admits Failures in Lebanon War but Won't Resign," 2 January 2007. Former IDF chief, retired lieutenant general Dan Shomron, a ground officer, also says "the prime minister instructed the army [the IDF] to halt the rocket fire on Israel, but the army failed to translate it into a military objective." Scott Wilson, "Israeli Head of Military Quits after War Critique; Leadership in Conflict with Hezbollah Faulted," *Washington Post*, 17 January 2007, A10.

112. "Today, the resistance has more—and I highlight the word 'more'—more than 20,000 missiles. Within a few days, even though it emerged from a fierce war, the resistance completely restored its military and organizational infrastructure, as well as its arsenal of weapons. Today, the resistance is stronger than on the eve of July 12." Transcript, Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah, at a victory rally, 22 September 2006.

113. IDF, ITIC at the Israel Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center (IICC), "The Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701 after Six Months; Interim Report," 4 March 2007, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/res_1701e0307.htm. See also Yaakov Katz, "IDF: Hezbollah Almost at Full Strength," *Jerusalem Post*, 21 December 2006, http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1164881939862&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull; and Editorial, "Confronting the Threats," *Jerusalem Post*, 4 December 2006.

114. It went on to say that "Lebanon was compelled to deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to the south, though the LAF has not moved to disarm Hezbollah. Additionally, the Lebanese government has now been told it is accountable for what occurs on all Lebanese territory

as a result of UNSCR 1701. Hezbollah leaders claimed victory and grew more assertive in their political demands as demonstrated by ongoing opposition demonstrations in Beirut. Hezbollah is currently focused on asserting political dominance in Lebanon. Iran and Syria remain committed to Hezbollah's survival. Israeli defense officials have publicly opined that due to the fluid situation the conflict could reignite during the summer of 2007." Lt Gen Michael D. Maples, director, Defense Intelligence Agency, "Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States," Statement for the Record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007.

115. "Interview: Maj Gen Benjamin Gantz," 38.

116. Amnesty International, "Israel/Lebanon: Evidence Indicates Deliberate Destruction of Civilian Infrastructure."

117. Human Rights Watch, "Israel: Government Committee Should Probe Lebanon Laws of War Violations," Press Release, 26 September 2006.

118. United Nations, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution*, S-2/1, A/HRC/3/2, 23 November 2006, 3.

119. Ibid., 27. "As with so many other cases investigated by the Commission, the IDF actions were indiscriminate and disproportionate. The destruction of so many civilian houses is not justifiable in terms of military necessity." Ibid., 32.

120. At the end of the year, Minister of Defense Amir Peretz argued at an event honoring soldiers who were injured in the war that, "The war against Hezbollah didn't receive appropriate recognition." Hanan Greenberg, "Peretz to War Casualties: We Achieved Goals in Lebanon," Ynetnews.com, 28 December 2006, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3345484,00.html.

121. Yoel Marcus, "One Leader with an Agenda," *Haaretz*, 26 September 2006, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=766887.

122. United Nations, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 4, 26.

123. Ibid.

124. Israeli MFA, "M. Olmert: Lebanon Is Responsible and Will Bear the Consequences." Halutz also warned that the air strikes were aimed at sending a "message" to Lebanese officials to stop Hezbollah. Erlanger, "Israel Vowing to Rout Hezbollah"; and CNN, "Israel Authorizes 'Severe' Response to Abductions," 12 July 2006, 0227 GMT, http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/12/mideast/.

125. AP (Beirut), "Heavy Clashes in Southern Lebanon as Hezbollah Announces Capture of Two Israeli Soldiers." "The Lebanese government, which allowed Hezbollah to commit an act of war against Israel, will pay a heavy price," Justice Minister Haim Ramon also warned. AFP (Beirut), "Israel Bombs Beirut Airport, 27 Killed in Raids," 13 July 2006, 0614 GMT. A retired Israeli army colonel was quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying that the goal of Israel's military campaign was also to "create a rift between the Lebanese population and Hezbollah supporters." In a message to Lebanon's elite, he said, "If you want your air conditioning to work and if you want to be able to fly to Paris for shopping, you must pull your head out of the sand and take action toward shutting down Hezbollah-land." Philip H. Gordon, "Air Power Won't Do It," washingtonpost.com, 25 July 2006, A15.

126. Yaakov Katz, "High-Ranking Officer: Halutz Ordered Retaliation Policy," *Jerusalem Post*, 24 July 2006. IDF spokesmen vigorously denied any such objective, though there were authoritative reports and rumors that 10 buildings were hit in south Beirut on 13 July.

127. Information based upon attack and target database compiled by the author and Matthew McKinzie. The dates where no Hezbollah attacks occurred in the Beirut southern suburbs were 17,

21, 26–28, 30–31 July and 1, 2, and 8 August. On 12 July, only the Beirut International Airport was bombed.

128. Cordesman, "Preliminary 'Lessons,'" 13.

129. IDF spokesman's office, "Dan Halutz' letter of resignation."

130. Organizational changes in the IDF from the 2000 withdrawal assigned greater responsibility (including command responsibilities) in both the general staff and the Ground Forces Command. This was done at the expense of both Northern Command and the army corps commands. Many of these organizational changes were done to restructure the IDF to "fight" in the Gaza and West Bank, where larger unit actions weren't perceived as needed.

131. For instance, retired major general Amiram Levin, who wrote a report about the Northern Command's performance, pointed to the new doctrine, which he said "had a crucial contribution to the flaws exposed during the war against Hezbollah." He called effects-based operations "fundamentally wrong," saying it could not have succeeded and should not have been implemented. Alon Ben-David (Tel Aviv), "Debriefing Teams Brand IDF Doctrine 'Completely Wrong,' " *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 3 January 2007.

132. IDF, "Summary of IDF Operations in Southern Lebanon in the Past 24 Hours (Prior to Cease-Fire), Monday 14/08/2006 14:40 [14 August 2006]," http://www1.idf.il/DOVER/site/mainpage.asp?sl=EN&id=7&docid=56700&Pos=1&last=1&bScope=True.