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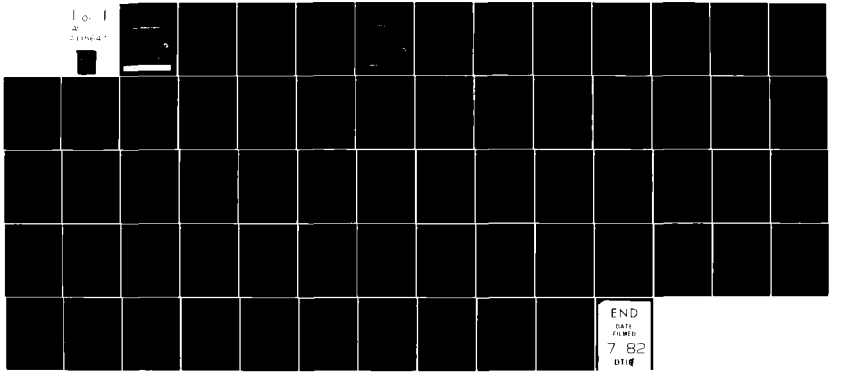

Israel's Strategic Doctrine

Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen

Rand

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Seeks to provide a contemporary picture of Israel's political-military doctrine. Focuses on its conditioning factors, such as Israel's view of the military threat to its security, the constraints under which it operates and the assets it disposes of. Political-military elements of the doctrine include emphasis on swift offensives, indirect approach, the special role of the Air Force and Armored Corps, and others. The study analyzes past posture and behavior, but discusses evolution and change only selectively with the purpose of elucidating the contemporary relevance of various themes and concepts.

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PREFACE

A better understanding of current Israeli political-military or strategic doctrine is a necessary component in the assessment of that country's security problems over the next ten years. Doctrine has a critical influence on both the day-to-day decisions and the long-term plans of military and political leaders. It is the basis for threat assessment and a guide for devising counters to the threats identified.

This publication is part of a Rand research project for the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, entitled "Israelis' Strategic Situation in the 1980s."

This report should be of interest to military and foreign policy analysts and to others concerned with the continuing competition between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It should also prove interesting to those concerned with Southwest Asia security issues.

SUMMARY

This study offers a profile of current Israeli strategic doctrine. By strategic doctrine we mean "a central core of generally shared organizing ideas" concerning a given state's national security problems. It is the means-ends chain that a state believes will best achieve security for itself. Israeli strategic doctrine is not to be found in any comprehensive formal statement by the Israeli government. Rather, the view of Israeli doctrine developed in this report has been culled from prior studies of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), articles and books by Israeli civilian and military decisionmakers, Israeli practice in crises and wars, and the current force posture of the IDF.

The study is divided into three sections: the *conditioning factors* affecting the doctrine, the intermediate level *political-military* elements of the doctrine, and the *operational elements* of the doctrine. These are interrelated. Political-military and operational elements reflect and address the conditioning factors identified. Operational elements serve as the "means" to the political-military elements or "ends" of the doctrine. The highest-level political ends of a strategic doctrine, associated with a given state's foreign policy, are not addressed here. Such a task is beyond our mandate, though a comprehensive examination of the relationship between those aspects of Israeli strategic doctrine discussed in this report and Israeli foreign policy would certainly be a useful exercise.

CONDITIONING FACTORS

Israeli strategic doctrine includes an intensive and extensive view of the *threat*. Most Arab states are seen as actual or potential members of a coalition seeking Israel's destruction or truncation. A single defeat may destroy the state. A single Israeli military victory cannot settle the conflict. Israel may face a future of endless war.

Israeli strategy must grapple with serious geographic, demographic, economic, and political constraints. Until 1967, Israeli *geography* was largely unfavorable for a defensive strategy. Because her economic and population resources are concentrated close to the Syrian and Jordanian borders, territorial gains in the 1967 war have only partially ameliorated Israel's vulnerability. The country is small. In the absence of strategic depth, space cannot be traded for time. The pre-1967 borders were long, and the topography did not particularly favor the defender. Modern jet fighters can quickly overfly the entire country. An armored breakthrough could rapidly cut it in half.

Israel faces a substantial quantitative *population* disadvantage. Her adversaries can maintain large standing armies while she must rely substantially

on civilian reservists who must be kept in a high state of readiness. Large Arab standing armies, and small Israeli regular forces, coupled with the geographic factors noted above, make for an Israeli sense of vulnerability to surprise attack. These factors also make Israelis feel vulnerable to extended attrition strategies.

Because of the sheer size of the Arab coalition, Israel has always faced a disparity of *economic resources*. Until 1973, Israelis seem to have believed that they might compensate for this disparity by generating a more advanced economy. This hope has been eroded by the quantum leap in Arab oil wealth over the last decade and the concomitant leap in the pace and scope of Arab military expenditures. Oil money may some day generate not merely additional weaponry (as it does already), but real proficiency in its operation. The effects of a prolonged economic crunch on Israel's strategic posture are multiple and potentially grievous, ranging from a negative balance of immigration, through limitations on training and the size of the standing army, to drastically increased dependence on American aid. In addition, economic vulnerability further constrains Israel's capacity to sustain protracted general war, or wars of attrition.

The possibility of *superpower intervention* is the fourth major factor constraining Israeli strategy. Both superpowers have had the capability and occasionally the will to interfere with Israeli strategic decisions either before or during wars. Soviet military aid to the Arabs has increased Israeli dependence on the United States. The Soviet Union has, on occasion, directly participated or threatened to participate in Middle East combat. Israeli dependence on the United States has allowed the United States to influence Israeli strategic decisions in important ways. Both superpowers have on occasion tacitly cooperated to prevent the complete success of Israeli military operations.

Israeli strategic doctrine also identifies geographic, political, and social *assets* and *opportunities*. The country's small size and central location relative to its adversaries confer the advantages of interior lines. Forces can rapidly be shifted from one front to another. Israel faces an adversary coalition that has often proven to be politically fragmented and plagued by uncoordinated decisionmaking among jealous and mistrustful partners. Israeli society is more technologically developed than those of the Arab states, providing an advantage in the operation of complex equipment. Organizational, political, and cultural factors enable Israel to make much fuller use of its available resources for war purposes than its Arab adversaries. Israeli military practice has long attempted to exploit all of these advantages.

POLITICAL-MILITARY ELEMENTS

The broad purpose of Israeli strategy is the *deterrence* of Arab aggression and the clear-cut defeat of the enemy if deterrence fails. The quest for effec-

tive deterrence has been bounded by Israeli dependence on conventional weaponry and classical military operations.* Deterrence is generally achieved by presenting a putative adversary with a credible threat to exact a high price should aggression be attempted. This price may take many forms, including damage to military forces or to civilian values. Although Israel can and has struck Arab values in response to aggression, several factors including the vulnerability of her own people to such attacks have tended to limit the scope of Israel's countervalue strikes. For Israeli strategic doctrine, the fundamental and most important price to be extracted from the Arabs is therefore the indisputable defeat and perhaps destruction of their armies. Even this kind of punishment is mitigated by the prospect of superpower intervention to stop wars before Israeli operations become decisive. Such decisive operations are meant to serve two functions and, accordingly, Israeli notions of deterrence apply to two different time frames. In the short term, Israel hopes that Arab memory of previous defeat will "deter" them from initiating any particular war. In the long term, Israel hopes that a string of such defeats will result in a process of cumulative dissuasion ending in permanent Arab resignation to Israel's existence.

Four elements contribute to deterrence and figure importantly in Israeli strategic doctrine in their own right. Israel has at various times identified *casus belli* to warn the Arabs to avoid certain political and military actions that might put Israel in special danger. Israeli strategists feel that if these are violated, Israeli preemption might be justified. These also provide alarm bells for the Israelis themselves, warning them of sudden deteriorations in the state's security position and of the erosion or failure of deterrence.

"*Decisive*" (clear-cut) *military victory* is also seen to play a critical role in Israel's deterrence strategy. To exact maximum price from the Arabs, to encourage abstention or defection from the anti-Israeli coalition by individual Arab states, and to impress on the Arabs the long-term futility of their efforts, Israeli strategists deem it essential that wars should end with the indisputable military defeat of the Arab armed forces. Decisive victory is also seen as the surest and perhaps the only Israeli means of war termination. Israelis fear that anything short of such results might lead to a protracted contest of attrition for which the Arabs possess greater resources.

Israelis feel that they must preserve the image of *autonomy*. Because she is a small and economically weak state, dependent upon a superpower patron, Israel must convince her enemies that an indirect approach, through the patron, cannot bring Arab success. Israel seeks to convince enemies and allies that on critical matters she is capable of acting on her own.

Defensible borders are also felt to be important to the deterrence strategy. The more naturally defensible the borders, the less dependent Israel is on American military aid. Militarily, such borders improve Israel's autonomous

*It is widely believed that Israel can explicitly introduce nuclear weapons into the deterrence equation whenever she wants to. The Israelis have thus far demonstrated no inclination to do so. In any case, nuclear weapons and strategy have been excluded from this discussion altogether.

image and capabilities. Moreover, by making Israel a tougher target, Israelis feel that defensible borders may help convince the Arabs that Israel cannot be conquered, or that the costs of any given invasion attempt will be too high.

OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

The major operational elements of Israeli doctrine include an emphasis on *offensive* operations, *preemption, speed,* the *indirect approach,* the exploitation of superior "*macro-competence,*" and *all-arms, combined-arms operations.* These elements are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. They are the means to the political-military elements outlined above. They are especially important to the decisive victories deemed essential for short-term and long-term deterrence. They best exploit the assets and best respond to the constraints identified by the doctrine.

CONCLUSIONS

This report is a summary rather than a critique of Israeli strategic doctrine. It does not, therefore, lend itself to striking conclusions. Two characteristics of the strategic doctrine are worth noting, however. First, the doctrine is a response to a set of enduring constraints, problems, and assets many of which are unlikely to change very much, except perhaps under the impact of nuclear weapons if and when they are introduced into the region. Second, Israeli strategic doctrine is, *at the level discussed in this report,* a reasonable and integrated response to those constraints, problems, and assets. This observation is not meant as an endorsement of Israeli strategic doctrine. Rather, it is important to understand that the various political-military and operational elements of Israeli strategic doctrine relate to one another in powerful ways. To confront one element of the doctrine, in negotiation or war, is to confront the rest of the doctrine and to raise a host of what might appear to be ancillary issues. Such issues will not be ancillary to the Israelis.

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This report was written as part of a larger study of Israel's strategic situation in the 1980s currently being prepared by Anthony Pascal, Steven Rosen, and Benjamin Lambeth of The Rand Corporation. The authors benefited from their suggestions and criticism at all stages of research and writing. Abraham Becker of Rand and Francis Fukuyama, formerly of Rand and now with the U.S. Department of State, have been particularly generous with their time and advice. Professor Yeheskel Dror of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem read a substantial part of the report in draft form and made useful comments. Professor Nadav Safran of Harvard University reviewed the manuscript and offered many constructive suggestions. To all of them go our warm thanks.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of this study is to develop a profile of the current strategic doctrine of the state of Israel. It is not our intention either to provide a critique of Israeli strategic doctrine or to suggest alternatives. Rather, we attempt to capture what the Israelis themselves seem to believe about their security situation and about the role of military power in resolving their security problems. An understanding of Israel's strategic doctrine can help explain the pattern of the state's peacetime military preparations and probable wartime behavior.

Conceptually, a strategic doctrine should be viewed as a given state's "theory" about how to produce security for itself. It may be viewed as a means-ends chain, in which military capabilities are connected to military outcomes, which are themselves connected to political outcomes. The "theory" is tested against the continued survival and well-being of the state that holds it. A strategic doctrine identifies threats and remedies and attaches priorities to each. Ideally it does so in a way that exploits the advantages of the state and minimizes those of its opponents. Priority is a critical aspect of strategic doctrine, particularly in the case of small or poor states, because with limited means hard choices must be made.

We do not argue that Israel or any other state sets out to create a model strategic doctrine. However, by fits and starts they do develop strategic doctrines that perform the tasks outlined above. These doctrines are often tacit and not fully coherent or consistent. They are usually incomplete. Pieces of the doctrine remain in dispute. Nevertheless, a central core of generally shared organizing ideas can be identified around which such disputes occur. We hesitate to use the word consensus in reference to strategic doctrine because it connotes a degree of explicitness that we do not always find. Nonetheless, it is our judgment that rough maps of the strategic doctrine of a given state can be constructed. Such maps are useful in explaining the structure of a state's military forces, predicting the evolution of those forces, imagining how the force will be employed in battle, and projecting likely war objectives.

In the widest, or "grand" sense, strategic doctrine incorporates economic, moral, demographic, and other factors upon which a nation's security is contingent in various ways. This study, however, will not be concerned with "grand strategy" so understood, but more narrowly with the way Israel prepares for and fights wars, and its connection with political objectives such as deterrence. It will briefly address some of the nonmilitary aspects of Israel's strategic doctrine where they impinge directly on the role of military force. The military aspects of Israel's strategic doctrine will thus loom larger than the political aspects.

One example of the difficult grand-strategy questions that have not been

addressed is that of the West Bank. One might argue that there is a tension between the security benefits of West Bank geography and the security costs of West Bank demography and diplomacy. Israelis have grappled with this question, but no resolution is in sight. We have excluded it from this study. Similarly, the introduction of nuclear weapons into the Middle East by Israel or her adversaries is a critical grand-strategy question. It may also impinge directly and significantly on the possibilities and patterns of conventional warfare between Arabs and Israelis. We have not addressed this question either, because it seems contingent upon a number of complex economic, technological, political, and even psychological judgments that merit a major study in their own right. Moreover, Israeli strategic doctrine remains obscure on the question of nuclear weapons. We have therefore chosen to set the nuclear question aside rather than discuss it in a cursory and possibly misleading fashion.

Since strategic doctrines often develop in haphazard ways, they must be inferred from a variety of sources. To assemble this profile we have relied on four types of sources. First, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have already been the subject of considerable study. Such studies, in English and Hebrew, have provided a useful starting point for understanding Israel's strategic doctrine. Second, Israeli military officers, political figures, and defense analysts have published a number of books and articles in English and Hebrew on the political and military aspects of Israel's strategic doctrine. The proliferation of memoirs and the conduct of public debate in the Israeli press since the 1973 war have been particularly illuminating. Third, practice in crises and war provides a guide to Israeli strategic thinking. Since prior experience tends to heavily influence subsequent developments in strategic doctrine, a study of Israel's wars reveals many of the sources of Israel's strategy. Fourth, current force posture and its evolution provide rough evidence to support or disconfirm judgments about Israeli strategic doctrine. While disjunctions between force posture and strategic doctrine are common, salient long-term features of a state's force posture can provide insights into its military thinking.

Most studies of the IDF and its doctrine follow a rather historical approach, outlining developments in chronological sequence from war, through interwar, to war. Our purpose in this study is more contemporary. We attempt to picture Israel's strategic doctrine as it probably is today, though, as noted above, analysis of past posture and behavior is often integral to our inferences about the present. Therefore, we will discuss evolution and change only selectively in those instances and insofar as is necessary to explicate the extent and manner in which certain concepts apply today. The changing role of "preemption" in Israeli theory and practice over the past 20 years, to cite one example, will highlight the complexity and contingency of this "principle" of Israeli doctrine.

Finally, a caveat is in order. For the sake of clear exposition we may have imposed more coherence on Israeli doctrine than is actually warranted. As noted above, strategic doctrines need not be, nor are they usually, complete or internally consistent in every way. In particular, once wider "grand strategic"

considerations are brought into the picture (which we have not done), the "logic" of particular operational principles may appear more questionable. Nevertheless, we have found that, for better or worse, there has been a substantial measure of continuity and internal coherence in Israel's approach to its problems of military security. We believe that exploration of these elements of constancy and consistency is particularly instructive.

The main body of the study is divided into three subsections: the *conditioning factors* affecting the doctrine, the intermediate level *political-military* elements of the doctrine, and the *operational elements* of the doctrine. These are interrelated. Political-military and operational elements reflect and address the conditioning factors identified. Operational elements serve as the "means" to the political-military elements or "ends" of the doctrine. The highest-level political ends of a strategic doctrine, associated with a given state's foreign policy, are not addressed in this report. Such a task is beyond our mandate, though a comprehensive examination of the relationship between those aspects of Israeli strategic doctrine discussed herein and Israeli foreign policy would certainly be a useful exercise.

II. ISRAEL'S STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

CONDITIONING FACTORS

The Threat

Israel tends toward a view of the threat that is both extensive and intensive. It is assumed that most or all Arab states are part, at least potentially, of a coalition aimed at destroying or truncating the state of Israel.[1] The number of Arab states involved in the 1973 war and the ongoing buildup in the projection capabilities of more distant Arab states, especially those of Iraq, have aggravated Israeli concern.[2]

This view of the resources and strategic depth of the other side has generated a bitter realism regarding the attainable objectives for the Israelis in any particular war. Former Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Israel Tal notes that from its earliest days, the Chiefs of the IDF understood that they "did not have the option of gaining a final and definite national decision by means of the military defeat of our [Israel's] enemies." It was understood that the Israelis could not "impose their will on a region stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf."[3] Hence, the conflict could continue for a very long time, with an indeterminate number of "rounds" (a common Israeli term for the major wars).

The length, breadth, and intensity of the conflict, the material disparities between the sides, and their reading of volatile internal and regional Arab politics, have led Israelis to regard seriously Arab rhetoric about the "elimination of Israel by stages" or long-term strategies of attrition.[4] These are

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[1]See, for example, M. Handel, *Israel's Political-Military Doctrine*, 1973, p. 64. The peace treaty with Egypt, while it does affect Israeli estimates of the probability of Egyptian participation in an Arab assault on Israel, does not remove Egypt from the roster of major potential adversaries, now or in the foreseeable future. Israeli military and political figures have stressed this fact consistently since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. See, for example, Z. Schiff, "Two Chiefs of Staff Who Spoke Out" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, May 15, 1978; former Chief of Military Intelligence, Maj. Gen. (Res.) S. Gazit, "The Yom Kippur War—The Earthquake from Whose Cracks Grew the Peace Process" (Hebrew), *Yediot Aharonot*, October 1, 1980; and Brig. Gen. (Res.) A. Shalev, "Security Arrangements in Sinai Within the Framework of a Peace Treaty with Egypt," *Center for Strategic Studies Papers*, October 1978, p. 2.

[2]Maj. Gen. (Res.) S. Gazit, in Louis Williams (ed.), *Military Aspects of the Israeli-Arab Conflict*, 1975, pp. 193-194. Brigadier General Y. Raviv estimated the possible Iraqi contribution to the "Eastern Front" as up to five divisions with 1200 tanks. Y. Raviv, *The Israel-Arab Military Balance Following the Peace Treaty with Egypt* (Hebrew), 1979, p. 13. As of this writing, the Iraq-Iran war shows promise of tying down much of the Iraqi military capability for the foreseeable future.

[3]Maj. Gen. I. Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine: Background and Dynamics," *Military Review*, March 1978, p. 23.

[4]Y. Harkaby, *Arab Strategies and Israel's Response*, 1977. Maj. Gen. A. Yariv, "Strategic Depth—An Israeli View" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-1, October 1979, pp. 22-23.

supposed to bring about the progressive geographic shrinkage of Israel (first to the pre-1967 borders, then to the 1947 U.N. partition lines), or sap the country's energy and will to the point of ultimate collapse.

Constraints

Israeli strategic thinking has consistently been influenced by four important constraints—Israel's geography, its small population, comparatively meager economic resources, and superpower involvement in the region.

Geography. Almost all Israeli military commentators and students of Israeli strategy have commented on the formative impact of the country's small size and long, thin shape on military thinking. The absence of strategic depth, particularly in the east and north, and the tremendous relative length of the borders plagued Israeli strategy.[5] Israel's population, industry, and military infrastructure are heavily concentrated and within easy reach from the borders. The only partial exception to this resulted from Israel's deployment in the Sinai, which we expect to be completely reversed by 1982. A major Arab incursion at any one of several critical parts of the country could therefore have catastrophic results.

Two conclusions were drawn early on: that Israel must create artificial strategic depth by means of fortifications in depth (particularly fortified settlements) and, more important, that all wars must be transferred to enemy territory as quickly as possible.[6] The latter task automatically implies a requirement for substantial offensive capability, and a built-in inclination to preempt. A third conclusion, widely agreed upon since the 1967 war, is that the 1949 armistice lines imposed intolerable risks on Israel so that border modifications and other "security arrangements" are necessary to render them "defensible."

Population. It is not uncommon to hear Israeli officials speak of 120 million Arabs versus 3.2 million Jews. Even if only the "frontline" states are counted, Israel has always been vastly outnumbered in potential manpower resources, and so perceived herself; hence the structure of the IDF since its early days, with heavy reliance on a highly trained reserve that can rapidly mobilize a percentage of the Israeli population.[7] The Arab confrontation states, particularly Egypt and Syria, have been able to maintain much larger standing armies, potentially capable of making a swift transition to attack from their peacetime positions in order to exploit the small size of Israel's standing army and disrupt the mobilization of the reserves. A central Israeli lesson from the 1973 war, during which the IDF was seriously short of units

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[5]Yariv, op. cit. For a detailed examination of "Military Geography and the Military Balance in the Arab-Israeli Conflict," see Steven Rosen's *Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems*, 1977.

[6]Tal, op. cit., pp. 24-25; Y. Allon, *Curtain of Sand* (Hebrew), 1969, p. 69; Handel, op. cit., pp. 24-25; E. Luttwak and D. Horowitz, *The Israeli Army*, 1975, pp. 90, 212; Col. G. Avidor, "From Brigade to Division," *Military Review*, October 1978, p. 65.

[7]Tal, op. cit., pp. 22-25; Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., p. 76.

on both fronts and unable to transfer them from one to the other, has been the importance of "masses," the need for substantially larger air and ground forces.[8] Currently, as Arab states mobilize larger numbers of their citizens for war, as distant states such as Iraq and Libya acquire capabilities for entering the dispute in a big way, and as overall skill levels within the Arab armed forces begin to improve, Israel has found itself "scraping the bottom of the barrel" and searching for even more efficient use of an almost maximally tapped pool of manpower.[9]

Their geographic and manpower limitations render the Israelis in their own eyes particularly vulnerable to a major surprise attack on the one hand, and to extended strategies of attrition on the other. Judging from both Arab theory and Arab practice (namely the 1969-1970 War of Attrition along the Suez Canal, and the October 1973 war), Israelis believe the Arabs have reached the same conclusions.[10] In view of their bitter experience in the 1973 war, the Israelis are no longer confident that there is or can be a completely adequate solution to the problem of surprise. They therefore have concluded that to contain a surprise Arab attack, it is essential for them to maintain (a) the most advanced and secure early warning system possible and (b) a substantially larger standing army than before.[11]

Economic Resources. Because of the sheer size of the Arab coalition, Israel has always faced a disparity of economic resources. Until 1973, Israelis seem to have believed that they might compensate for this disparity by generating a more modern and technically advanced economy. This hope has been eroded by the quantum leap in Arab oil wealth over the last decade and the concomitant leap in the pace and scope of Arab military expenditures.[12] Oil money may someday generate not merely additional weaponry (as it does already), but real proficiency in its operation.

American aid has enabled Israel to increase its own defense budget substantially during the same period, but it cannot hope to match the rate of increase in Arab spending, let alone approach its absolute dimensions. The Israelis are also keenly aware of two grave inherent drawbacks of foreign aid: it cannot be reliable, and it creates dependence. Aside from the drastically

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[8]Lt. Gen. M. Gur in *Ma'ariv*, report of radio interview (Hebrew), October 27, 1974. Brig. Gen. D. Tamari, "The Yom Kippur War—Concepts, Estimates, Conclusions," *Ma'arachot*, October-November 1980, pp. 12, 14, 15, 16. Maj. Gen. A. Tamir, "Quality vs. Quantity" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, Summer 1976, p. 38.

[9]Z. Schiff, "Failure of a Social Experiment in the IDF" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, March 1, 1976; "The Limit of Military Growth" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, September 24, 1976; "This Is the IDF Now" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, April 20, 1980. Lt. Col. Tibi, "Manpower Potential—A Different View" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-1, October 1979, pp. 98-99. See also S. Rosen, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

[10]Yariv, op. cit., p. 22. Col. N. (IDF), "The Attack Helicopter and the Tasks of Defense," *Ma'arachot*, No. 272, February 1980, pp. 6-7.

[11]Tamari, op. cit., p. 15.

[12]The increase has been greatest among some of the oil producers themselves, of course, most notably Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Libya. But petro dollars from these countries and from Kuwait and the Gulf principalities have also generously supported the military buildup of Israel's immediate neighbors, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt (Egypt has been cut off from this flow since 1978 but has been receiving substantial military and economic aid from the United States).

increased dependence on American economic and military aid, the effects of a prolonged economic crunch on Israel's strategic posture are multiple and potentially grievous. They range from a negative balance of migration, through limitations on training and the size of the standing army, fewer flying hours for IAF pilots, fewer call-up days for reservists, and cuts in the levels of emergency stockpiles, to possible encouragement among some elements of the Arab coalition of the view that time is on their side and the conflict worth prolonging. In addition, economic vulnerability further constrains Israel's capacity to sustain lengthy general wars (the Eighteen-Day, October 1973 war was considered "long") or protracted wars of attrition.[13] Aside from the direct costs of war in terms of materiel damaged and expended, the country's economy is strained to the limit in times of emergency by the absence of the majority of all able-bodied civilian men, who constitute two-thirds of the IDF's wartime strength.

Superpower Intervention. External big powers have had a substantial impact on the conduct of Arab-Israeli wars in various direct and indirect ways. The major cases of *direct* superpower influence that have conditioned Israeli concerns and defined the constraints and dangers as Israelis see them fall into several categories:

a. Pressure by the United States not to preempt against a mounting threat (e.g., May-June 1967, October 6, 1973).[14]
b. Manipulation of arms supplies during a protracted war (the discomforts of dependence were felt acutely during the 1969-1970 War of Attrition and again in October 1973).[15]
c. Soviet participation in combat (1970) or the threat of it (October 24, 1973) and even the threat implied by Soviet patronage of some Arab

[13]The bleak picture has produced intense and as yet apparently unresolved debate in Israel regarding both immediate and long-term implications. At one time in 1980, in the course of their debate with the IDF over the size of the defense budget, officials of the Treasury contended that the country's economic woes posed a greater and more immediate danger of "strategic collapse" than Arab military power. See Z. Schiff, "The General Headquarters vs. the Treasury" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, June 2, 1980. At about the same time there was a brief flurry of discussion in the media of the possible need for Israel to switch to some kind of nuclear strategy to compensate for the growing gap in resources. Former Defense and Foreign Minister Dayan has been arguing quite explicitly, though vaguely, in such a vein since the mid-1970s. See M. Merhav, "The Burden of Defense," *Jerusalem Post*, May 22, 1980, and "A Dr. Strangelove Defense Doctrine," *Jerusalem Post*, May 23, 1980; M. Dayan, *Avnei Derech* (Hebrew), 1976, pp. 685-686, and *Time*, April 12, 1976, p. 39. For a sample of the general discussion of the security implications of Israel's economic condition see Z. Schiff, "To Contract the IDF?" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, May 21, 1980, "The Cuts and the IDF's Power," *Ha'aretz*, June 3, 1980, "An Argument Without Winners," *Ha'aretz*, June 20, 1980, "Security Entangled in the Budget," *Ha'aretz*, December 19, 1980, "Sharon's Plan," *Ha'aretz*, December 26, 1980.

[14]M. Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*, 1975, pp. 386-402. W. B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 1977, pp. 43-45, 166. M. Kalb and B. Kalb, *Kissinger*, 1974, p. 460. M. Dayan reports in his memoirs that on October 22 Prime Minister Meir and he were told by the visiting Kissinger troupe that "Had we started the war ... even by pre-emptive strike in a war we had not initiated, we would not have received from the U.S. a single nail!" *Avnei Derech*, p. 663.

[15]Brecher, op. cit., pp. 486-487. Quandt, op. cit., pp. 97-102. N. Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally*, 1978, pp. 481-482, 493. E. Weizman, *Yours Are the Skies, Yours the Earth* (Hebrew), 1975, pp. 323-324.

armies set major limits to Israeli war objectives in 1967 in Syria, in 1970 in Egypt, and in 1973 in both. (Further back, the British factor weighed heavily on Israeli operations against Jordan and Egypt in 1948.) Repetition of such involvement is not considered to be out of the question and remains a continuing fearful spectre.[16] In 1969-1970 and in 1973 it drove Israel to a policy of occasional direct confrontation with Soviet power.[17] As gingerly, limited, and sporadic as these confrontations were, they nevertheless constituted a significant departure from Ben-Gurion's "iron law" of no direct fighting with a big power.[18] It is clear from both Israeli actions and public discussion that most Israelis are very sober about the risks and seriousness of this policy, but that they regard it as crucial that the Soviets recognize certain "rules of the game" that leave the IDF essential flexibility in dealing with Arab armies.[19]

d. Denial of victory—Israeli decisionmakers generally felt that the combined and complementary pressure of the superpowers snatched away from the IDF an imminent clear-cut victory in August 1970

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[16]Such concerns may have been heightened by the signing in October 1980 of the Soviet-Syrian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Prime Minister Begin has worried publicly that there may be a "secret annex" to the treaty, allowing the stationing of Soviet forces in Syria. See, for example, report by David Shipler, *New York Times,* November 1, 1980, p. 12.

[17]The most notable single incident was an encounter on the Suez front between Israeli and Soviet fighter planes July 30, 1970, in which five Soviet Mig 21s were downed. The Israelis deliberately engaged the Soviets as a signal of their determination to continue operating over the Egyptian side of the front during the War of Attrition. They had previously ceased their deep penetration bombing raids in the Egyptian interior as Soviet pilots took up its air defense. See Z. Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army (1870-1974),* 1974, pp. 199-200, and Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 323-326. In addition it has been generally believed that in the course of their losing battle against the carpet of antiaircraft systems that the Soviets and the Egyptians rolled toward the Canal in the summer of 1970, the IAF hit an indeterminate number of Soviets manning or commanding those systems. As Luttwak and Horowitz note, however, "in their Egyptian uniforms, [the Soviet ground troops'] undeclared role could be denied" (ibid.).

In October 1973, Israeli missile boats were reported to have sunk a Soviet freighter, together with a number of Syrian navy vessels, in an attack on the port of Tartus (Col. (U.S. Army) T. N. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory: The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947-1974,* 1978, p. 559). It has been rumored that in the course of the war the IAF hit a number of Soviet cargo planes in Syrian airports, but always on the ground, never in the air.

In the course of the war the IAF attempted to prevent Soviet cargo planes from landing in Syria by blowing up the runways of their destination, but according to published sources care was taken not to hit the planes themselves. See H. Bartov, *Daddo—48 Years and 20 Days More* (Hebrew), 1978, Vol. 2, p. 150.

[18]D. Horowitz, *The Israeli Conception of National Security: The Constant and the Changing in Israeli Strategic Thought,* 1973, pp. 36-38.

[19]Ibid. See interviews (Hebrew) with then Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. H. Bar-Lev, in *Ma'ariv,* June 5, 1970, p. 11; *La-Merchav,* February 5, 1971; *Ba-Machaneh,* September 19, 1971; and *Davar,* August 3, 1973.

Dayan in his memoirs summarized the problem: "The question was not whose pilots were better, but how to hold to our vital aims and at the same time avoid clashing with the Russians." Given the level of direct Soviet involvement in the Egyptian effort in 1970, an Israeli-Soviet clash had become "unavoidable." In that case, "Israel was not Czechoslovakia." *The Story of My Life,* 1976, pp. 543-544.

and again in October 1973.[20] (The British and Americans had combined to halt and turn back the IDF's sweep into the Sinai in 1948.) Israel's strategic doctrine has come to see superpower decisionmaking as if it were a stopwatch with a cycle of almost fixed duration. The cycle begins as soon as it becomes apparent that Israel is on its way to overwhelming military success. Once the cycle begins, Israel has very little time to "complete" its military operations before the superpowers stop the fighting (even in the case of the notable exception of the 1967 war, the assault on the Golan Heights was conducted "against the clock"). This has directly contributed to the Israelis' emphasis on speed and deception in their operational doctrine.

Although there is some recognition that the avowed American commitment may have a certain dissuasive effect on the Arab side (and on the Soviet),[21] superpower intervention is regarded, overall, as an obstruction and diminution of Israeli advantages. In particular, it is seen to provide the Arabs an opportunity to wage wars of limited liability, underpinning their basic advantage in extended attrition efforts.

In Israeli perceptions, an asymmetrical superpower role exists in the conflict, stemming from asymmetrical interests in the region.[22] Only the United States has interests with both sides. Therefore, although both the United States and the Soviet Union are seen to be opposed to outright Arab defeat, only the United States is opposed to massive Israeli defeat. The latter, Israelis fear, may be subject to different definitions by Americans and Israelis. Only the Soviet Union has directly intervened to prevent its client's defeat (Egypt, in 1970). The United States has not yet been called upon to do so: indeed, some Israeli leaders and analysts doubt that the United States would or could interfere to reverse a sudden Israeli military disaster. Finally, any battlefield setback so serious as to require superpower intervention to forestall Israel's defeat is seen as a blow to the state's entire long-term security position. This would be a strategic defeat, more serious than any defeat yet suffered by the Arabs.[23]

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[20]S. J. Rosen and M. Indyk, "The Temptation to Preempt in a Fifth Arab-Israeli War," *Orbis*, Summer 1976, p. 276.

[21]I. Tal, "Some Remarks Following the Symposium on Israel's Defense in the Eighties" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-71, October 1979, p. 46. Arguably, the American commitment to Israel has had much to do with dissuading President Sadat of Egypt from continuing the conflict. This factor recurs in his pronouncements. It is rarely raised by the Israelis themselves, however.

[22]D. Horowitz, "Israel's Concept of Defensible Borders," *Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems*, 1975, p. 16.

[23]Y. Allon, "Active Defense—A Guarantee for Our Survival" (Hebrew), *Molad*, July-August 1967, p. 140. See also a discussion of the possible merits of a defense treaty with the United States by former Foreign Minister Abba Eban and others (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, March 9, 1979. Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., p. 688. B. Amidror, "A Defense Treaty: A Piece of Paper," and "First There Are No Guns" (Hebrew), *Ha'olam Ha'zeh*, No. 2084, August 10, 1971, and No. 1084, August 17, 1977.

Assets and Opportunities

Israel's strategic doctrine has identified geographical, political, and social advantages and opportunities. These help to offset the constraints outlined above.

Geography. Israel's strategists have understood that although its small size and geographical encirclement deny the safety margin of strategic depth, they confer the advantage of interior lines.[24] Israel can rapidly concentrate its forces on one front, or shift its forces from one front to another. Israel's deployment in the Sinai following the 1967 war diminished this capacity, as a comparison of the 1967 and 1973 wars shows. (The problem in 1973, however, was greatly compounded by the fact that the Arabs had seized the operational initiative in both the north and the south, and by the length and indecisiveness of the struggle on both fronts.)

Politics. Closely related to Israel's "interior lines" asset is the fragmented nature of her adversary. Israel contends with a coalition. Napoleon Bonaparte once declared that if he had to make war, he would prefer to do so against a coalition. Coalitions tend to have coordination problems in planning and running joint military operations. They are plagued by disputes about risks, costs, and the distribution of plunder. Israeli strategists are aware that their state's central position allows it to "buffer and block communication and coordination between Arab armies."[25] The IDF has exploited these weaknesses in its enemies' camp ever since, and including, the 1948 war. Additionally, Israel's military practice in 1967 and 1973 shows an understanding that its adversaries' geographical and political problems allow Israel to concentrate first on one adversary, then on another. Throughout history, states in Israel's position have followed such strategies. Prussia and Germany many times made sequential attacks against the individual members of adversary coalitions.

Social. An ongoing theme of Israeli strategic thinking has been the need to exploit the differences between Arab and Israeli civil society to generate qualitative military superiority on the battlefield. Israel has long recognized the complementarity between Israeli strengths and Arab weaknesses. Each tends to magnify the impact of the other. Israeli military strategists also believe that modernized, westernized, industrialized, and democratic Israel enjoys special military advantages over less developed adversaries.[26] Such advantages allow Israel to generate a more technically competent, and more highly motivated force than her adversaries. Differences in internal cohesion have also meant that all of Israel's power is "usable" in war, whereas the Arabs have had to tie down forces for defense of the internal regime.[27]

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[24]Allon, *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., p. 59. Handel, op. cit., pp. 4-5. Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., p. 287. Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 23.

[25]Handel, op. cit.

[26]Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 24. Allon, *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., pp. 46-51 and Ch. 6.

[27]Concern for regime survival has also hampered the development of military professionalism in some Arab armies. Political leaders have often proscribed the large peacetime exercises neces-

Israel has deliberately chosen tactical and operational forms that maximize the battlefield impact of her superior "micro" and "macro" competence.[28] In the early 1950s, Ariel Sharon, then a paratroop commander, devised an entire tactical system for infantry assault against prepared Arab positions. This system was explicitly designed to exploit "the enemy's inability to improvise amidst confusion."[29] In planning for the 1956 Sinai campaign, Dayan explicitly incorporated his belief that the Egyptian commanders were "schematic," inferior to Israelis at improvising in a confused battle.[30] In analyzing Israel's success in the 1967 war, Dan Horowitz concludes that "effective 'qualitative superiority' [was] the outcome of an initial advantage rooted in the characteristics of the society from which the Israeli Army derived its human resources *plus a military doctrine and military strategy aimed at exploiting it.*"[31]

At least one Israeli social scientist has explained the Arab defeat in 1967 with reference to deep-seated aspects of Arab social structure, particularly a lack of social solidarity and a systematic tendency to bend the truth.[32]

Such problems, as well as many others associated with less developed societies, no doubt did play a role in Arab failures up to and including deficiencies observed in the 1973 war. In reviews of the 1973 war, Israeli observers have generally concluded that the gap between the IDF and the Arab armies in battlefield initiative, technical competence (the operation of tanks, boats, artillery, planes), and learning-in-battle capacity, had not diminished.[33] A study by T. N. Dupuy and the HERO organization tends to confirm this judgment.[34]

Although Israeli attitudes toward Arab weaknesses may sometimes appear to be crude expressions of misplaced feelings of cultural superiority, many of their military judgments seem to be correct. Other Rand research has con-

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sary to produce an effective modern military because such exercises bring together the leadership and the resources essential for a coup. Similarly, command rotation policies may aim less at improved military effectiveness than at preventing any one group of officers from developing the cohesion that might sustain political action. Finally, the officer corps is frequently seeded with political appointees of the regime who are promoted by loyalty rather than competence criteria. Ominously for the Israelis, the major Arab armies, especially the Egyptian but also the Syrian, have made significant progress toward amelioration of these problems. Appointments, rotation, and maneuver have in the 1970s been tailored much more closely and effectively to functional military needs than had been the case until the late 1960s. See A. Pascal et al., *Men and Arms in the Middle East: The Human Factor in Military Modernization,* 1979, pp. 40-41, and Dupuy, op. cit., p. 599.

[28]Pascal et al., op. cit., p. 51, explain the terms as follows: "*Micro-competence*—pertaining to individual skills in the operations, repair and provisioning of equipment . . . *macro-competence*—pertaining to collective capabilities to organize and operate forces effectively to fulfill military objectives."

[29]Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., p. 116.

[30]M. Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign,* 1965, p. 35.

[31]D. Horowitz, "Flexible Responsiveness and Military Strategy: The Case of the Israeli Army," *Policy Sciences,* Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1970, pp. 203-204.

[32]Y. Harkaby, "Basic Factors of the Arab Collapse During the Six-Day-War," *Orbis,* Fall 1967.

[33]See discussion by six Israeli major generals in *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), June 7, 1974, p. 224. Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 32.

[34]Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 597-601, 623-633.

cluded that Israeli advantages, particularly in the realm of macro-competence, are real, and may even be growing as weaponry becomes more complex, and as the battlefield becomes more complicated and confused.[35]

Nevertheless, many of those same Israeli and independent observers have noted that Arab performance in October 1973 did show a substantial improvement. A qualitative jump was demonstrated in commitment at every level, and in an impressive capacity to formulate a political and military strategy that optimized Arab strengths (in operations that were defensive, relatively static and set-piece, and manpower-intensive) and minimized the above-noted Israeli assets. Against the declared and time-honored Israeli predilection for "strategic defense, executed offensively,"[36] the Arabs, especially the Egyptians, implemented with impressive effectiveness a "strategic offense, executed defensively."

POLITICAL-MILITARY ELEMENTS

Israel's strategic doctrine includes within it a number of important political-military elements. These provide the general political guidance for the development and employment of Israel's military power. Important among these elements are Israel's concepts of deterrence, *casus belli,* military victory, acceptable costs, strategic "autonomy," and "defensible borders." These elements reflect the conditioning factors discussed above and provide the underpinnings for the operational elements of the doctrine discussed below. They are also related to one another.

Deterrence

The term "deterrence" has appeared frequently in the utterances of Israeli soldiers and statesmen since the early sixties. The adoption of the term at that time has been attributed in part to the influence of American academic defense thinkers.[37] It is important to note, however, that there has been little systematic, let alone theoretical, elaboration of the concept by Israeli decisionmakers. It is used in a rather general, undifferentiated manner, and is not necessarily equivalent in content or purported precision to its American antecedent.[38] The thrust of the Israeli view of the problem of deterrence and

[35]Pascal et al., op. cit.

[36]Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., pp. 5-6, n. 1.

[37]Horowitz, *The Israeli Conception of National Security* . . ., op. cit., 1973, p. 23.

[38]Among scholars, the term deterrence usually applies only to strategies that aim to dissuade an adversary from aggression by the threat of pure punishment in response. Strategies that aim to dissuade an adversary from aggression by creating the impression that he will be denied his objective merit another term. These are normally called "defensive" strategies. (The term "defense" is used here in the strategic sense. The Israeli *Defense* Forces achieve their mission with a mix of offensive and defensive tactics.) See Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force,* 1971, p. 60. Put another way, deterrence strategies aim to increase the adversary's

its implications for Israel is nevertheless sufficiently clear to allow systematic reconstruction.

To date, Israeli discussions of deterrence have assumed either a conventional contest, or the substantial independence of the realm of conventional warfare from such unconventional means as either side might possess or appear to possess. (Whether this will change, and how, as nuclear proliferation looms on the Middle Eastern horizon, are questions of great consequence but outside the purview of this study.) Israeli notions of deterrence are fundamentally conditioned by their perception of the limitations of conventional warfare in general, the particular limitations on their conduct of it, and the nature of their adversary. These notions must be viewed within the full range of constraints identified above from which the Israelis derive a number of general conclusions:

- Mere frustration of Arab efforts to destroy Israel will not in itself suffice to deter their continuation. The tremendous disparity in size and resources will sustain hopes of future success. Arab politics, within and among states, put a premium on the perpetuation of the conflict. Finally, denial of sudden destruction does not foreclose the possibility of material and moral attrition to the same end.
- The penalties the IDF might exact from Arab armies and societies are also seen as insufficient, in themselves, to deter successive Arab attacks. The intensity of Arab commitment may make them worthwhile so long as victory appears even remotely possible. Moreover, the nature of internal and intra-Arab politics creates gaps between those who stand to gain by continuing conflict and those who bear its brunt. Finally, there will always remain the possibility that a swift success would reduce Arab war costs, and the likelihood that superpower intervention will limit them in case of failure.
- Even by combining denial[39] and "punishment,"[40] the IDF cannot expect to achieve the historical resolution of the conflict in any particular "round." Instead, they hope that Arab resignation to the permanent existence of Israel will result from a gradual process of cumulative dissuasion. It may be attained by progressive breakup of the Arab coalition, rather than by simultaneous turnaround of all its members.
- For such resignation to come about, persistent frustration and heavy

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perception of his risks and costs, should he embark upon aggression. Defensive strategies aim to reduce one's own risks and costs, should war come. (Glenn Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense*, 1961, p. 3.) The Israeli armed forces are oriented mainly toward preventing the conquest of the state, toward defense. Punishment of their adversaries is an ancillary objective, and a residual capability of the forces on hand. Because Israeli strategy is not formally set up for deterrence, Israelis should not be surprised when deterrence fails (and usually are not), regardless of what they call their strategy.

[39]"Denial" is here used to mean the successful preservation of the physical integrity of Israel.

[40]"Punishment" is used here to connote the costs exacted in the course of war, on the battlefield, and in the rear of Arab states.

costs will have to be capped by the "appropriate" Arab perceptions of the historical trend. The Arabs will need to be impressed with Israel's indefinite capacity to sustain the costs and exertions of further "rounds," as well as the futility of the perseverance and prohibitive cost to them in the long term.[41]

- Perception of the degree and consistency of American commitment to Israel may be an important factor in Arab assessments of historical trends. There is also occasional reference to an American rule in setting limits to Soviet intervention.[42] But insofar as the American commitment is contingent, it is regarded as problematic (see pp. 6-9 above and discussion of "Autonomy and Dependence," pp. 23-26 below).

Israelis understand that deterrence is difficult if not impossible to ensure and seldom feel confident about their security. Fragmented and fragile deterrence constantly tests the flexibility and credibility of the IDF. The timing, manner, or results of particular outbreaks have often taken Israelis by surprise, but they have never for long assumed that the previous "round" was the last. Both the 1967 and 1973 wars were unexpected when they occurred (with different degrees of immediate surprise, of course). Before each of these wars, however, Israeli national intelligence estimates had forecast fairly early future dates (1969-70 and 1975-76, respectively) of mounting danger of war.[43] Even in 1972-73, when they were clearly overconfident, the Israelis were well aware of the uncertainty of conventional deterrence. In the course of 1973 Dayan was particularly, though inconsistently, concerned with the danger of a large-scale Syrian foray to "grab" territory and settlements on the Golan. In the spring of 1973 he even warned the IDF General Staff to be ready for war during the second half of the year. Throughout 1973, Chief of Staff Elazar was explicitly concerned, he, too, inconsistently, with the imminent possibility of the kind of Arab attack that indeed was to come.[44]

These considerations affect Israeli calculations as to how to deploy and employ their military capability for deterrent effect. They must, in their view, project both the capability to deny, by defensive and disarming operations, and the capability to punish, by substantial destruction of Arab armies and occasional infliction of strategic damage beyond the battlefield. It appears from their rhetoric, and indeed from their conduct of military operations since 1956, that the Israelis have come to put increasingly greater emphasis on IDF

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[41]Y. Rabin, "Israel's Defense Problems in the Eighties" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-1, October 1979, p. 19.

[42]Tal, "Some Remarks . . .," op. cit. Maj. Gen. U. Narkis, "A Generals' Colloquium," *Ma'ariv*, May 4, 1971, p. 7. Bar-Lev, interviews (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, *Ma'ariv*, June 5, 1970, and *Davar*, August 3, 1973. Y. Allon, "Stock-Taking Between Two Campaigns" (Hebrew), *Molad*, October-December 1973, p. 505.

[43]Weizman, op. cit., pp. 154-157; Z. Schiff, *October Earthquake*, 1974, p. 31; Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 187, 299.

[44]Bartov, op. cit., pp. 195, 200, 241-248, 265-270, 290.

punishment of the enemy, militarily and economically.[45] Furthermore, they consider it essential that Israel display the will to act autonomously and escalate hostilities where necessary to avoid "playing" on Arab terms. These last may be attempts to dictate or exploit certain limitations on warfare (as in terrorist or guerrilla operations or wars of attrition).[46] Alternatively, they may be attempts to encroach on major Israeli interests or otherwise seek to change the balance of power by means short of actual attack. Central Israeli protagonists of the May-June 1967 events have argued that initial failure to project such will in the face of serious provocations dissipated the credibility of Israel's deterrent posture. This more than anything else, they maintain, made war inevitable.[47]

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[45]"And if war breaks out? . . . Then we must conduct aggressive war, the objective being action deep in enemy territory, destruction of the Arab forces and infliction of severe damages. . . . This must be known to us all and also to the Arabs, so that the significance of their choice between peace and war be understood by them proper." I. Tal, "New Principles for National Security" (Hebrew), *Davar* (weekly supplement), May 9, 1975.

The 1956 general command to the IDF, to "bring about the collapse of the Egyptian force-structure in Sinai," contrasts with the 1967 order to "destroy the Egyptian army." See Z. Schiff, "The Cost of Victory" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, June 3, 1977; Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 142, 154, 249.

The 1969-70 War of Attrition was a contest in the infliction and bearing of pain. Lt. Gen. D. Elazar concluded, as did his colleagues, that "it was not our brilliant defense that broke the Egyptians and led them to agree to a cease-fire, [but rather] our heavy counter-pressure, the hitting of the Canal cities and the bombings inside Egypt." Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 198.

In the spring of 1973, in IDF High Command discussions of future war objectives Elazar is reported by his biographer to have explicitly stressed "infliction of maximum casualties" as one of those objectives. Ibid., p. 244. In the course of the 1973 war, Elazar and other Israeli leaders sought to inflict a particularly heavy blow on Syria so as to knock it out of the war swiftly, thus both forestalling and deterring Iraqi and Jordanian participation. Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 121-122. Elazar urged the government, and eventually was instructed, to carry out air attacks against strategic targets inside Syria.

For all this, the "punitive" element in Israeli operations is severely restricted by two major considerations: First, a measure of mutual deterrence regarding civilian targets and unconventional means of warfare (see Tamari, op. cit., p. 13); second, Israel's reluctance, because of its own casualty sensitivity, to prolong the fighting or engage in frontal assaults whereby both sides' losses might be increased. It should be noted that the "strategic bombing" of Syria that took place in October 1973 was limited and brief, and was undertaken after the Syrians had fired a number of ground-to-ground Frog-7 rockets into northern Israel. See Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., p. 609.

[46]In a television interview in May 1973, then Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. D. Elazar issued a typical warning: "The Egyptians can open or not open fire, but I think they understand that they cannot decide on limitations in the war." Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 268. For the Israeli strategy of military reprisals in the 1950s and 1960s, see Shlomo Aronson and Dan Horowitz, "The Strategy of Controlled Retaliation—The Israeli Example" (Hebrew), *Medina U-Mimshal*, Summer 1971, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 77-99. During the hostilities with Egypt, September 1967-August 1970, the Israelis consistently avoided symmetry with the Egyptians by expanding the range of targets hit, as well as the geographic scope and means of their attacks. Thus, in response to the sinking of the destroyer *Eilat* the IDF shelled Egyptian refineries along the Suez; in response to an Egyptian strategy of static warfare along the Canal, the IDF carried out commando raids on targets in Upper Egypt, along the Suez Gulf, and elsewhere; finally in response to Egypt's reliance on its massive superiority in artillery, the Israeli Air Force was used to enormously increase the IDF's firepower and reach. See Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 316-319.

[47]Y. Rabin, report of a lecture on the slide to war, *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), September 22, 1967; I. Tal, "The Deterrent Capability Was Lost 10 Years Ago" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, June 10, 1977. Maj. Gen. Mati Peled, "Days on the Threshold" (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, May 16, 1969. Weizman, op. cit., pp. 261-262. See also Safran, op. cit., p. 409.

From opposite sides of the border-fence, both Egyptian editor of *Al-Ahram* M. Heikal and Israeli generals Rabin and Yariv were agreed in the closing days of May 1967 that at stake was

In a temporally extended strategy of cumulative dissuasion, war outcome itself becomes an integral element of future deterrence. As Israel sees its problem of deterrence, both the short run and the long run require *clear IDF conventional military superiority* over its adversaries.[48] The shakiness and complexity of such deterrent posture further demand, in the Israeli view, that the IDF prepare to apply its superiority, whenever deterrence fails, in an offensive operational mode and in pursuit of indisputable military victory. This posture is seen as the optimal way, possibly the only way, to insure denial, inflict significant punishment, and impress the Arabs with these capabilities as clearly as possible, in advance (see discussions of these themes below).

Casus Belli

Casus belli have been defined by the Israeli scholar Dan Horowitz as "vital Israeli interests vulnerable to short-of-war Arab provocations which could be regarded as violations of the rules of the game of a relatively stable dormant conflict."[49] Put more simply and directly, a *casus belli* is an event that may be the cause and alleged justification of a general war or a large-scale military action. Some *casus belli,* such as interference with freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran, have been officially designated as such. Others, such as certain violations of the status quo in Jordan (takeover by Egypt or Syria, for example), or by Jordan (concentration of tanks on the West Bank before 1967), have been mentioned by Israeli leaders in discussions and writings.[50] Although not regarded as automatic triggers for war, *casus belli* are meant to draw in advance generally recognized behavioral or geographical "red lines" to serve three general purposes:

1. Lessen the possibilities of miscalculation leading to unintended escalation (arguably, the events of May-June 1967 demonstrated the fallibility of the system in this regard, but many other examples could be adduced to argue its worth).
2. Provide a clear signal to Israel that "the deterrence system" is no longer effective and that military action is called for.

Israel's credibility and that war had become inevitable. See Heikal, "An Armed Clash with Israel Is Inevitable—Why?" *Al-Ahram,* May 26, 1967, excerpted in W. Laqueur, *The Israel-Arab Reader,* 1968, pp. 179-185, and Y. Rabin, *Pinkas Sherut* (Hebrew), 1979, Vol. 1, pp. 152, 154, 158.

[48]Allon, "Active Defense . . .," op. cit., p. 239. Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., p. 9. In a briefing to editors in June 1970, Henry Kissinger emphatically agreed with the Israeli view: "a military balance is death for Israel, because a war of attrition means mathematically that Israel will be destroyed . . . [so] the Israelis have to aim for superiority." Quoted in Kalb and Kalb, op. cit., p. 191.

[49]Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., p. 9.

[50]Allon, "Active Defense . . .," op. cit, p. 141. S. Peres, "The Time Dimension" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot,* No. 146, 1962, quoted in Horowitz, *The Israeli Conception of National Security . . .,* op. cit., p. 25. Most recently Deputy Defense Minister M. Zippori publicly warned that "For us, the Iraqi army in Jordan is almost . . . a *casus belli.*" *New York Times,* November 1, 1980, p. 4.

3. Lay a basis for international legitimation of such Israeli military action.

In conjunction with an "offensive" military capability (see the discussion on pp. 29-34 below), Israel's *casus belli* are intended to prevent serious deterioration in the state's strategic situation, which could result from certain incremental short-of-war Arab moves. To this end, the *casus belli* extend general deterrence to particular Arab actions, short of an attack on Israel. On occasion, this has involved the extension of Israeli protection to others.[51] In any case, *casus belli* extend Israel's defense perimeter away from the country's vulnerable demographic and industrial core.

Between 1948 and 1967, major Israeli interests were vulnerable to "nonviolent" actions, such as diversion of the Jordan River tributaries in the north, for example. Even more important, the Israelis considered their borders "indefensible" in the event of Arab concentration of offensive forces along them. The *casus belli* principle, therefore, played a central role in Israel's defense posture during that period. Failure to respond to a *casus belli* might weaken Israel in two ways: First, the intrinsic value of the stake lost; second, the damage to Israel's credibility and general deterrent posture, calling into question its commitment to other *casus belli*. Deployment of the IDF along "defensible borders" substantially diminished Israel's concern over the vulnerability of its heartland and vital interests between 1967 and 1973. Fewer short-of-war Arab actions could or needed to be defined as *casus belli*. A variety of Arab actions—ranging from PLO raids to possible closure of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb—might occasion Israeli countermeasures. But the Israelis did not at that time foresee a need for them to be the actual initiators of a general war.

Developments since 1973 have brought about a certain resurgence of the *casus belli* principle in more or less explicit forms. The demilitarization of the Sinai within the terms of a formal treaty with Egypt is the clearest and most important. Then Prime Minister Rabin's warning to the Syrians, in 1976, not to cross a certain "red line" in Lebanon was observed without major hitches until April 1981.[52] Finally, increased sensitivity, since 1973, to the offensive potential of the standing armies directly confronting them has probably lowered Israeli tolerance of the size and proximity of possible expeditionary forces (especially Iraqi) in Syria or Jordan.

The future, especially if it involves further Israeli relinquishment of territory in the context of contractual agreements, may witness a return of the

[51]The most dramatic examples have been the Israeli support of Jordan in 1970 and of the Christians of Lebanon over the last five years.

[52]The meaning of that "red line" was reportedly elaborated in a letter by Foreign Minister Allon to U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger for conveyance to the Syrians. It apparently involved restrictions on Syrian use of air power and antiaircraft systems in Lebanon, as well as the specification of a geographic line (apparently the Zaharani River, north of the Litani River) as the southernmost limit to Syrian ground deployment. See "Syria is resisting pressure to remove missiles in Lebanon," *New York Times*, May 5, 1981, pp. 1, 9; and "Tough issue for Israel: Syrian missiles," *New York Times*, May 6, 1981, p. 3.

casus belli principle to its pre-1967 importance, and more, in more formal and rigid manner. The demilitarization (of Sinai) provisions of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty are a case in point. The more geographically vulnerable Israel becomes, the more it can be expected to rely on hard-nosed *casus belli* to bridge the gap between a policy that aims to deter the outbreak of war and an operational doctrine that stresses the advantages of preemption or "anticipatory" offensive war.[53]

Military Victory

Closely related to Israel's notion of deterrence is the quest for what might be called "decisive"[54] operational victory. It has already been noted that Israeli strategic doctrine has long assumed that there can be no definitive military solution to her security problem. Israel's adversaries cannot simply be subjugated by military power. However, it is an extremely important tenet of Israel's strategy to deal a clear defeat to the Arab coalition whenever there is a general military encounter.[55] "Draws" or ambiguous results will not do because the Arabs have a greater reserve for them, or so they may think—thus gaining encouragement to persevere and try again.[56] Indeed, crushing defeat of their adversaries by offensive operations in the enemy's own territory is seen by the Israelis as their only reliable means of ending a war altogether, to prevent its becoming a drawn out slugging match.[57] It is also regarded as an essential element, though not always sufficient in itself, for the attainment of a favorable political bargaining position after the war.[58] This is closely and explicitly related to deterrence. Israelis calculate that disarming or destruction of Arab armies in a general war will maximize Arab costs—as well as make them impossible to disguise. Such results are expected

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[53]Allon coined the term "anticipatory counter-offensive," to distinguish his recommendation that the IDF always be ready to preempt an impending Arab attack from "preventive war," which he opposed "from both a moral and a political point of view." *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., pp. 69-75; "Active Defense . . .," op. cit., p. 140.

[54]This is the commonly used translation of the Hebrew term "Machria." It is the closest equivalent, but a somewhat misleading one. The Hebrew expression does not necessarily carry the implication of "decision" or determination of events beyond prevailing on the battlefield in a big way.

[55]"Decisive" defeat of the enemy *coalition* may not require vanquishing each of its members to the same degree. Rather, the Israelis seek to crush the most threatening, centerpiece elements of that coalition. Thus in 1973 the Israelis were content to handle Jordan's involvement in the war in the limited and localized fashion that it occurred. The IDF tackled those Jordanian units that actually sought combat on the Golan Heights, but did not carry the battle to other Jordanian units or to Jordanian territory. Its strategic objective was to break the military and political core of the Arab coalition: the Syrian and Egyptian armies.

[56]At this point, indeed at any time since 1956, inconclusive military results might seem better than tolerable to the Arab side. Israelis noted with profound dismay Arab jubilation in the wake of the 1973 war when relative improvement over the defeats of the past signified to many observers a reversal of the historical trend.

[57]Tamari, op. cit., p. 14. See discussion of the "offense" in Israeli strategy on pp. 29-33 below, and of Israel's aversion to wars of attrition on pp. 38-39.

[58]Tamari, op. cit., p. 16. See also n. 61, below.

to leave a long-lasting impression of Israeli will, prowess, and autonomy. They are also intended to cause the Arabs to despair of the hope that time is on their side.[59]

Perhaps the most tangible and least disguisable among the necessarily imprecise criteria for "victory" is the territorial factor. It is also the most symbolic. The Israelis therefore regard it as crucial that the Arabs not make territorial gains in war, at the very least.[60] Depending on the circumstances at the outbreak of war, seizure of Arab territory may appear a more or less viable option—as a deterrent threat, as a politically potent symbol of victory, and as material means for improvement of Israel's military and bargaining position.[61]

Tal has traced the requirements for decisive victory back to Israel's earliest strategic thinkers. "We must conclude our wars with the advantage clearly on our side. The Arabs must be the losers. . . ."[62] In 1965 Dayan could conclude in his diary of the first Sinai campaign that

> Israel's readiness to take to the sword to secure her rights at sea and her safety on land, and the capability of her army to *defeat* the Egyptian forces, *deterred* the Arab rulers in the years that followed from renewing their acts of hostility.[63]

Shimon Peres has made similar judgments of the effects of the 1956 victory and the 1967 victory. He declares that "Deterrent power—the power to deter the enemy from attacking—is also the power to *vanquish* him if he should fail to be deterred."[64] Yigal Allon asserts that after the 1956 war it became a fundamental element of Israel's strategic doctrine "that only an army capable

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[59]Abba Eban's statement in 1965 encapsulated the Israeli approach, until then and since: "We want to create doubt, and eventually resignation and despair [in the Arab mind] about the dream of eliminating Israel from the world's map." *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, July 2, 1965, quoted in Steven J. Rosen, "A Stable System of Mutual Nuclear Deterrence in the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *The American Political Science Review*, December 1977.

[60]Hence the tenacity of the IDF's "rigid defense" in the Sinai in 1973, even though the battle took place a considerable distance away from Israel's heartland. Hence also—once the attempts to dislodge the Egyptians from the narrow strip they gained on the East Bank of the Canal had failed—the IDF's determination to seize Egyptian territory on the West Bank of the Canal in turn. It was deemed essential that the Arabs be deprived of any concrete "net gain" by war. In the north the IDF strained, with some success, to inflict further territorial loss on the Syrians. See Col. M. Pa'il (IDF Res.), "The Yom Kippur War—A Historical Look at the Strategic Plane" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, No. 276-7, October-November 1980, p. 4; Tamari, op. cit., p. 13; and Dayan, *Story of My Life*, op. cit., p. 516.

[61]In every way, the geographic and political starting points of the 1967 war made seizure of Arab territory a more attractive and more viable option than was the case in 1973. The Israelis had more to gain and greater prospects of postwar international support for retention of their conquests, for defense and bargaining purposes. The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and other agreements involving Israeli withdrawal, if and when any should be reached, will again increase the attractiveness and legitimacy of territorial conquest as a central element of IDF victory in the event of Arab aggression. See Lt. Gen. M. Gur, in L. Williams (ed.), *Military Aspects of the Israel-Arab Conflict*, 1975, pp. 200-202, and n. 67 below.

[62]Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 25.

[63]Dayan, *Diary . . .*, op. cit., p. 207, emphasis added.

[64]S. Peres, *David's Sling*, 1970, pp. 218, 245, emphasis added.

of winning would have the power to deter" and "that the hope to deter depended not on military strength alone but on the credibility of using it at the proper time and *in a decisive way*."[65]

In the aftermath of the 1973 war, the interest in a decisive victory remains strong, in spite of superpower intervention to prevent such a victory in 1973.[66] Indeed there are rhetorical indications that precisely because victory was "snatched away" then, the IDF may want to "set the record straight" next time around.[67] Israeli leaders may consider it especially important to teach Syria, in particular, the "unmistakable lesson" they feel it has always avoided in the past (in contrast with Egypt who bore the brunt of Israeli efforts in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1969-70, and even 1973). In 1975, Lieutenant General Mordechai Gur, then Chief of Staff of the IDF, expressed his belief that a "decisive victory" was not only a worthwhile objective for Israel, but an achievable one. Going back over the history, he declared that the 1948, 1956, and 1967 campaigns ended with such victory. Although the 1973 campaign had not ended satisfactorily, it might not be a model for the future.

> Since the Super Powers have their own problems too, situations do develop in such a way that, if you have to go to war, it is possible to create an international political understanding of why the war has been started; and you might handle the war in such a way that will enable you to achieve a decisive military victory.[68]

In the years since 1973 there has been some recognition in Israeli discussions that certain benefits may have redounded to Israel from the American-engineered "draw" with the Egyptians. It is seen to have restored "Arab honor" sufficiently to allow Sadat to proceed daringly to peace. Nevertheless, we see no reason to believe that Israel will be inclined to seek or accept such results in any future war. The dangers and costs of a 1973-type war and 1973-type results bordered on the catastrophic, in Israeli eyes. The next Arab assailant will probably not be perceived to be a potential Sadat, certainly not in the midst of a war (a possible exception might be Hussein of Jordan, depending on the degree and manner of his involvement). Against their major enemies, the Israelis are unlikely to try to "fine-tune" the conduct or results of another war in pursuit of uncertain long-term benefits, when faced with concrete imminent costs. Finally, Israeli analyses of Egypt's turn to peace generally stress the bloody military "lesson" administered to the Egyptian army by the IDF and the cumulative exhaustion of the Egyptian nation after

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[65]Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army*, 1970 (English edition of *Curtain of Sand*), p. 62, emphasis added.

[66]Rosen and Indyk, op. cit., p. 276. For a forceful recent reiteration of the Israeli reasoning, see Tamari, op. cit., p. 16.

[67]See, for example, repeated assertions by former Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. M. Gur that the IDF is preparing itself, in case of war, for clear-cut victory on all fronts that will improve Israel's strategic-geographic and political situation. Report of radio interview in *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), October 27, 1974. Interview in *Davar* (Hebrew), May 4, 1976; report of press conference in *Ha'aretz*, January 17, 1977.

[68]Gur, in Williams (ed.), *Military Aspects* . . ., op. cit., pp. 201-202.

30 years of bearing most of the Arab costs in the conflict. Sadat was made to realize that even with the most favorable possible opening conditions his army was about to be vanquished by the IDF. This more than anything else is believed to have set the basis for his subsequent turnaround, and to have vindicated Israel's strategic doctrine.[69]

Acceptable Casualties

Students of Israeli military history regularly emphasize the country's acute sensitivity to casualties. Luttwak and Horowitz have argued that this sensitivity influenced various phases of the 1973 campaign. Michael Handel postulates casualty minimization as an important parameter in Israel's political-military doctrine.[70] These judgments, while essentially correct, must be put into perspective. Israel's small population renders it psychologically and materially vulnerable to manpower losses. (Arguably, its democratic political system accentuates its disadvantage in this regard vis-a-vis its Arab adversaries.) This conditions both Israeli and Arab assessments of the results of conventional large-scale wars (viz. Israeli and Arab reactions to their respective losses in the October 1973 war, variously estimated at up to 1:8).[71] It also conditions Israeli tolerance for lower-level but protracted blood-letting in wars of attrition or terrorism.[72] The implications of casualty sensitivity for the IDF's operational behavior, however, have not been uniformly straightforward. Often they have been mediated by and even subordinated to other doctrinal considerations.

The IDF tends to be capital-intensive in both force posture and operational style. A superb Medical Corp is one of its lesser known achievements. In these respects, however, it is not significantly different from the armies of other democratic industrial states. It is well known that the American military has sought to minimize casualties whenever possible by the substitution of fire-

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[69]Yariv, "The Wars that Led to Peace," *Yediot Aharonot* (Hebrew), October 10, 1978; Gazit, op. cit.; Brig. Gen. A. Bar-On, "The Yom Kippur War: 'Failure' or 'Victory'?" *Ma'arachot* (Hebrew), No. 276-7, October-November 1980, pp. 34-35.

Most Israelis do not ignore or discount other contributing factors for Egypt's turn to peace. Arab perceptions of an Israeli nuclear option and of an American commitment to Israel, as well as the restoration of "Arab honor," are variously adduced. But the military results of the October War are seen as the "clincher." The circumstances of that war, unlike those of 1948, 1956, and 1967, afforded the Arabs no excuses or illusions.

[70]Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 206-207, 335, 385, 387, 389; Handel, op. cit., p. 68.

[71]Estimates vary greatly, mostly because of uncertainty about Arab losses. Both the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London (in its Strategic Survey 1973, 1974, p. 26), and Dupuy (op. cit., p. 609) estimate Israelis killed, wounded, and missing as 11,000-12,000. The former puts Arab losses at 97,000, however, and the latter at 37,000.

Then Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence Maj. Gen. S. Gazit observed in 1975 that as the Arab armies, particularly the Egyptian, inducted higher numbers of better class young men, for technological and other reasons, politically important sectors of those societies had become more casualty-sensitive. "Arab Forces Two Years after the Yom Kippur War," in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 194-195.

[72]Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

power, even in cases such as Vietnam where firepower may have been inappropriate to the task at hand.[73]

The major operational conclusion the Israelis have drawn from their predicament is that to minimize casualties, wars must be kept short.[74] This in turn translates in their eyes into a requirement—reinforced by many complementary considerations examined throughout this report—for swift offensives and "decisive" victory. The IDF's penchant for the "indirect approach" (see pp. 39-42 below) is partly explicable in terms of casualty sensitivity. Nevertheless, when the speedy attainment of vital strategic objectives appeared to require frontal assaults, the Israelis have tended to accept the prospective costs rather than redefine the goals or settle readily for inconclusive results. The deadly battles to keep open the lines of communication to the Suez Canal crossing site in October 1973, and the repeated assaults on Mt. Hermon during the same war, are two of the more notable cases in point. Even more significantly, the IDF embarked on its strategic counter-offensive in the south on October 15, 1973, in the knowledge that it would be an extremely costly proposition. The previous day, October 14, the IDF had crushed a major Egyptian attempt to improve on their initial gains. In the north, the IDF had halted its advance, having pushed the Syrians well beyond the prewar lines.[75] Yet it was imperative in Israeli eyes that the IDF strike a knockout blow to the Egyptian army so as to end the war and prevent the Arabs from drawing the "wrong" conclusions from their initial successes. The casualties had to be taken as an investment in better bargaining positions and future deterrence.[76]

It is valid to question an inference from past behavior to subsequent "doctrine." Lessons drawn might after all be the reverse, i.e., not to repeat such behavior. In the event, Israeli casualties on the southern front during the October 15-24 phase of the campaign were even higher than during October 6-14 (and much higher, per day, compared to the immediately preceding pe-

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[73]Israel's massive use of heavy weaponry and firepower in its 1978 "Litani Operation," rather than more imaginative commando tactics, was criticized in some Israeli quarters as an ominous sign of "Americanization."

[74]Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 25. Gur, interview in *Davar* (Hebrew), May 4, 1976.

[75]The halting of the Israeli counter-offensive against the Syrians on October 13-14, 1973, is sometimes adduced as an example of Israeli willingness to give up strategic objectives because of supposedly extraordinary casualty sensitivity. Yet even here the lesson is ambiguous. Israelis had already more than wiped out the initial Syrian territorial gains. They had seized some additional territory and had inflicted very high losses on the Syrians, five to ten times as heavy as in 1967. At that point, the feasibility (not just the cost) of further advance against the awesome natural and artificial barriers between them and Damascus was questionable, given the forces at their disposal. Even if it were feasible, it is not at all clear the Israelis would have wanted to greatly increase the risk of triggering Soviet intervention. (Israeli sources report that on October 13, Israel received information that the Soviets were preparing two or three divisions for flight to the Middle East. Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., p. 636; Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 195; Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army*, op. cit., p. 306.) Finally, the earlier decision to concentrate on Syria first had assumed a switch of effort to the south as soon as possible. The effort in the north was halted in time to free the IAF and much else (including even some redeployment of armored units) for this purpose.

[76]Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 634-641

riod of October 9-14).[77] Yet it is notable that neither at the time nor in the course of the bitter public debates since has there been significant dissent from the decision to cross the Canal.[78] Furious debate has raged over particulars of timing and execution, and these are related to cost, of course, but there appears to be a profound and widespread conviction as to the necessity and net benefit of the offensive. Among other things, as noted above (pp. 20-21), it is seen as having contributed quite directly to Sadat's subsequent turn to peace.

In sum, it is clear that at the social-political level there is a marked difference between Arab and Israeli casualty sensitivities. Indeed, both sides agree on this point and have integrated it into their respective military strategies.[79] Given their general view of the conflict, however, the Israelis tend toward a somewhat complex "calculus" regarding casualties. Because short wars are believed to reduce casualties, the IDF may occasionally be willing to pay a high human price to win a particular "decisive" battle that will end a war. Because a big "win" is believed to dissuade or delay future attacks, and thus limit future casualties, the IDF may be willing to pay a good deal for an impressive victory. Thus, one should not quickly discount the possibility of any particular IDF operation simply because it may involve high casualties. Rather, one should examine the potential overall benefits of the operation.

Autonomy and Dependence

Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, repeatedly attempted during the 1950s and early 1960s to establish formal alliances with external

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[77]The battles to reach the Canal, and set up and maintain the bridgehead across it were among the costliest of the war on either front, as were Sharon's subsequent advance towards Ismailia and Adan's thrust into Suez City. See Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 649, 653-654, 657, 660, 667; T. N. Dupuy et al., *Comparative Analysis, Arab and Israeli Combat Performance, 1967 and 1973 Wars*, Report prepared by the Historical Evaluation and Research Organization, DNA001-76-A-0089-0001, 1976, pp. 20-22.

[78]Dayan and Tal opposed the idea at an early stage, before the major Egyptian thrust on October 14, 1973. Thereafter there appears to have been no major disagreement. See Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 181-191, 226. Also Maj. Gen. A. Adan, *On Both Banks of the Suez* (Hebrew), 1979, pp. 181-183.

[79]Nasser launched the 1969-1970 War of Attrition on the assumption that Egypt could sustain much higher casualty rates and yet drain Israel's moral and material energies first. See Schiff, *A History* . . ., op. cit., p. 245, and *October Earthquake*, op. cit., p. 10.

Egyptian accounts of the 1973 war make it clear that Sadat set the infliction of heavy casualties on the Israelis, even at the price of substantially higher Egyptian losses, as a central war objective. He expected it, correctly, to have a disproportionate effect on the Israelis. Heikal reports that on the second day of the October 1973 war, Sadat wrote to Syrian President Asad, advising against acceptance of a cease-fire as the Soviets were then urging. According to Heikal, Sadat insisted that "It would be a mistake . . . to think that the object of the fighting was to gain territory—it was to bleed the enemy, and to do this we must be prepared to accept severe losses." *The Road to Ramadan*, 1975, p. 212. Heikal notes that "the Egyptian command had been prepared for 26,000 casualties in this [October 6] initial attack." Ibid., p. 41. See also H. Badri et al., *The Ramadan War, 1973*, 1978, p. 92, and statements by Egyptian generals El-Gamasy and Fouad Nassar, and by the noted Palestinian military analyst El Ayrbi, quoted in Rosen, "Military Geography . . .," op. cit., p. 54.

great powers. Nevertheless, the same Ben-Gurion also established strategic autonomy as a fundamental principle of Israel's strategic doctrine.[80] The notion has never been defined in precise terms. It quite clearly never meant, as it could not, material self-sufficiency in the development and procurement of arms. It connotes, rather, the maintenance of the will and capacity for self-reliant action on behalf of independently defined national interests, even in the face of the opposition of friends. In the course of the years Israel has jealously guarded its autonomy, so understood. Its preemptive strike in June 1967, its deep-penetration raids of Egypt in 1970, its completion of the encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army on October 23-25, 1973, the "Litani Operation" in the spring of 1978, and its long-standing policy of activist anti-guerrilla warfare all attest to that assertion. (Close examination of the context and consequences of these actions, however, often reveals constricted conditions and limitations from which the Israelis have always struggled to retrieve every possible measure of freedom of action.)

Ben-Gurion's craving for alliances has fared less well both in theory and in practice. If and insofar as a formal defense treaty with the United States might also involve an assurance of a stable and plentiful supply of high-quality technology and arms over the long term, it might make a very concrete contribution to Israeli security. It might also significantly affect Arab assessments of the historical trend. For a variety of reasons, however, Israelis have concluded that external guarantees of their security are not only difficult to obtain (this may have become less true), but would be fundamentally unreliable. Besides, their price might be prohibitive, the more so if Israel earnestly sought them. Public discussions of possible American guarantees reveal Israeli wariness of the limitations this might impose on the state's freedom of action, especially since the guarantor might not always agree with Israel in defining threatening situations.[81] Israelis are also concerned that, in exchange for a defense treaty with the United States, they will be expected to relinquish territorial assets that directly affect Israeli capacity for *self*-defense. Israel's small size, coupled with the speed of modern warfare, will make it difficult for an external power to intervene in combat in a timely

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[80]Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., pp. 6-8.

[81]Particularly traumatic for the Israelis, in this regard, were the events of May-June 1967 and August-September 1970. In 1967, as Nasser poured his forces into the Sinai, removed the U.N. buffer forces, closed the Straits of Tiran, issued increasingly bellicose statements, and even drafted Jordan into an anti-Israeli alliance with Egypt and Syria, the Israelis spent several weeks trying first to get the United States to act on its 1957 guarantee to Israel regarding its right of passage in the straits, then to convince the Americans that the threat to Israel was fast superseding even that issue. To the increasingly anxious Israelis it seemed that the United States was dragging its feet and constantly a step behind the relevant action. See Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, op. cit., pp. 43-59. In 1970 the American-engineered cease-fire along the Suez Canal was violated by the Egyptians and Soviets (who were not an official party to it) as they promptly spread a dense antiaircraft network to the Canal itself. It took the U.S. government over three weeks, and further massive violations by the Egyptian-Soviet side, to publicly acknowledge the validity of Israel's urgent protestations—and to urge restraint on both sides. See Safran, op. cit., pp. 949-950, and Quandt, op. cit., pp. 106-108. The installation of the "missile wall" in August-September 1970 provided the essential underpinning for Egypt's thrust across the Canal three years later. See Heikal, *Road to Ramadan*, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

manner, should a disaster begin to unfold.[82] Israel's current public position on the issue—Prime Minister Begin has said Israel would consider a defense treaty with the United States if approached—is probably not so much tongue in cheek as reflective of genuine ambivalence.[83]

In the meantime Israel's growing dependence on the United States for the bulk of its military equipment and finance is not taken lightly.[84] Israelis fear that together with the heavy reliance on U.S. economic assistance, such dependence risks a long-term erosion of the state's overall political-strategic-territorial position.

Limited as its possibilities are, Israel has gone to great lengths to improve its own capability to manufacture armaments. Such efforts have taken two forms. First, Israel is striving to maximize both stocks and production capability of combat consumables. Second, it has endeavored to establish the base for production of important large items such as tanks and aircraft.[85] Such measures, it is hoped, will reduce the influence of American preferences in Israel's conduct of wars and increase the credibility of Israel's resistance to American pressures during peace or territorial negotiations. While they do not eliminate dependence on the United States, these measures might ameliorate the political effects of such dependence.

President Sadat of Egypt has often declared that "99 percent of the cards" are in American hands. Whatever his precise meaning, such views are doubly pernicious, in Israeli eyes, and must be disproved. They tend to confirm Israel's adversaries in their refusal to deal with Israel itself, leading them, in-

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[82]Allon, "Active Defense . . .," op. cit., p. 140. Peres (then Minister of Defense), Keynote Address in Williams, op. cit., p. 6.

[83]See the report in *Yediot Aharonot* (Hebrew), September 30, 1980. See also the debate about a U.S.-Israel defense treaty by Eban et al. (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, March 9, 1979.

Underlying the contrast with Ben-Gurion's quest for alliances in the 1950s and early 1960s is a fundamental shift in Israeli assessments of the long-term balance of power in the conflict. Ben-Gurion was not sure that Israel alone could, in the long run, withstand an overall Arab coalition once the Arabs began to realize their potential. His successors have tended to take a different view of the Arab potential and of Israel's capacity. In the wake of the 1973 war and the rise of Arab oil power, however, some Israelis have again begun to voice concern about the historical trend. Dayan has argued repeatedly since the mid-1970s for Israeli reliance on nuclear weapons to make up for the country's limited human and financial resources. See, for example, Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 685-686, and *Time*, April 12, 1976, p. 39. In 1980 there was a brief public flurry of discussion of such a possibility in the Israeli media. See, for example, Merhav, "The Burden of Defense," op. cit., and "A Dr. Strangelove Defense Doctrine," op. cit.

[84]Israel's concern for secure sources of weaponry has been a constant in its history. Today it claims to acquire about a third of its military equipment internally. That this claim can be made at all reflects the acceleration of efforts toward achieving a significant measure of self-sufficiency following the abrupt imposition of an arms embargo by France in 1967 (as well as a less well-known "freeze" of American deliveries for six months after the Six Day War). British embargo of Centurion spare parts in October 1973 and, more importantly, the problems of American resupply provided yet another spur to Israel's efforts to maximize self-sufficiency in combat "consumables."

[85]For Israel's purposes it may not be necessary to manufacture such items independently and completely. Rather, Israel may choose to manufacture as much of each piece of equipment as can be justified on relatively loose cost-effectiveness grounds. At the same time, it will attempt to generate the know-how to make the transition to complete Israeli manufacture of such essential items should the need be forced on them.

stead, to seek to use the United States as an indirect "power multiplier" of great effect against Israel. They also tend to diminish Israel's deterrent credibility by casting doubt on its will and capacity for independent action.[86] It is therefore crucial, from Israel's point of view, that both Arabs and Americans be plainly disabused of Sadat-like notions. The greater the constrictions of dependence for Israel, the greater also the perceived need for an assertive military and political posture.

Defensible Borders

While it is not the purpose of this report to examine possible territorial arrangements for a future peace settlement, it is necessary to note that Israeli strategic thinking includes a very powerful belief that the pre-1967 borders are unacceptable. Those lines are regarded as militarily indefensible and therefore inviting attack.[87] The belief is so widespread among soldiers, politicians, and the public at large as to approach national consensus.

There is no consensus, nor an official position, about the precise borders that would be militarily "defensible" and therefore acceptable. There have been competing territorial plans and theoretical formulations couched in rather general terms. Former Foreign Minister Abba Eban may have come closest to capturing their essential common denominator when he defined them as "borders which can be defended without a preemptive initiative."[88] The specific requirements for such borders may vary substantially from south to east and north. In general terms, borders that create a measure of territorial depth and provide Israel with some sort of defensive advantage would:

1. Provide critical margin of safety (in time and space) in case of surprise attack or initial IDF setbacks.
2. Make Israel a tougher target, and thereby contribute to both short- and long-term deterrence.
3. Add to the number and flexibility of operational options, such as the ability to absorb a first strike, and defensive strategies become at least feasible.

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[86]Then Chief of Staff Rabin concluded in September 1967 that "the impression that Israel . . . will not act on its own without the aid of another large state" (after the closing of the Straits of Tiran went unanswered) "led to the next stage of the confrontation: the entrance of . . . the Egyptian military reserve into Sinai," thus escalating the threat to Israel. Speech reported in *Ma'ariv*, September 22, 1967.

Then Chief of Staff Gur declared in December 1976 that "as a result of the increase in the IDF's power in all spheres, Israel's freedom of action, both for peace moves and in case war is imposed on us, is now much greater. . . . The Arab countries know with certainty that we possess military power that enables us, if we reach a crisis situation, to act of our own volition without dependence on any external factor." Interview (Hebrew) in *Ma'ariv*, December 24, 1976.

[87]Y. Allon, "Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 55, No. 1, October 1976, pp. 41-43. For a detailed discussion of "Military Geography and the Military Balance in the Arab-Israel Conflict," see Rosen, op. cit.

[88]*Ma'ariv*, June 6, 1969, quoted in Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., p. 13.

In the absence of defensible borders, Israel's security position would be more tenuous. There would be less slack to exploit in crisis. Israel could not afford to accept the first blow. The tendency to preempt would rise, with concomitant problems for crisis stability.

When they were first coined after the 1967 war, the terms "defensible borders" and "secure borders" were used interchangeably. Increasingly since 1973, Israeli strategic thinkers have come to distinguish the wider term "*secure*," incorporating factors such as political incentive for enemy attack, from "*defensible*," taken to stand for a narrower military attribute.[89] Many have recognized the possibilities of tension between the two and grappled with them.[90] In this sense, Israel's leaders and the public generally recognize the near-absurdity of the idea of "secure borders without peace." Yet they find the idea of "peace without defensible borders" or "secure borders that are not defensible" equally absurd given the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Underlying the Israeli determination to retain "defensible borders" is a belief that in the current and foreseeable conditions of the Arab-Israeli conflict there is no adequate substitute for territory as a military asset. As noted above, the Israelis are well aware that "security" is a wide-ranging and complex function that encompasses political factors, quantitative and qualitative elements of arms-balance, arms-control, and many others.[91] In principle, different mixes of these factors, in varying degrees, might "produce" the same or similar measures of security. It may be the case, for example, that the defensive capabilities of modern weapons systems could create a measure of functional if not actual "strategic depth," by performing the same function of blocking and delay of large attacking forces by relatively few defenders. Recent Israeli discussions indicate awareness of these issues and interest in

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[89]See, for example, interview with I. Tal, "New Principles for National Security" (Hebrew), *Davar* (weekly supplement), May 9, 1975. Some have sought to drop the terms "secure" or "defensible," or to substitute others for them. Thus H. Bar-Lev, whose rhetoric before 1973 was indistinguishable in this regard from the mainstream, has come to dismiss those terms as misnomers. Instead, he prefers the term "reasonable." His substantive stipulations for the latter, however, are less novel: "It should be drawn so that it does not tempt either neighbor to launch a military attack," and "It [should] not run through the vital areas of either country" (interview in *Newsweek*, July 24, 1978). Specifically, for example, "reasonable boundaries" for Bar-Lev imply "the need to hold on to a greater or lesser part of the Jordan Rift" (interview in *Jerusalem Post*, July 10, 1978).

In the above mentioned interview and on other occasions, Maj. Gen. Tal actually goes much further than most of his colleagues in politics or the military when he says: "Secure borders, strategic depth, [these] have never seemed to me fundamental questions that should dictate to us a conception regarding the nature, contours and size of the state in the future when peace comes." Tal complements his flexibility on the question of borders, however, with emphatic insistence on the "principle" of "first-strike" and "offensive operations deep in enemy territory, once the state is seriously threatened." Interview in *Davar*, May 9, 1975, and "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 27.

[90]The dilemma is commonly presented thus: the borders that are ideally "defensible" will not be recognized in a settlement ("secure"), and the borders that can be recognized will not be defensible. Some Israelis deny the first part of the proposition; others see no stable peace in any case; yet others, probably most, still search for a politically and militarily viable compromise.

[91]M. Gur, in particular, has insisted on decreasing the size of opposing armies as a crucial element in any viable security package, which might, with time "lead to reconsideration . . . of the territorial questions." Interview in *Davar* (Hebrew), April 21, 1978.

their possibilities.[92] There is little evidence, however, that such interest has actually decreased the value Israeli decisionmakers attach to territory. For one thing, it has been argued that the speed and precision of modern weaponry actually increase the importance of topography and geography in the modern battlefield.[93] Moreover, and perhaps even more importantly in the Israeli perspective, geography is the one constant among the numerous factors upon which "security" is contingent. Political circumstances, arms-control measures, the defensive-offensive biases of technology—all these are variable, even fickle. Erosion of the military balance as a result of major change in any of those variable factors would arguably increase the importance of the strategic depth provided by the Golan Heights and the West Bank, the advantages of commanding the high ground, the blocking and delaying functions of paramilitary settlements, secure lines of communication to the fronts across these territories, and forward deployments and stores. The boundaries agreed upon in any settlement will not change, of course, until and unless they become the starting-point for some subsequent war.[94]

Certain rhetorical tenets of the 1967-1973 period, such as Dayan's stated preference for Sharem-a-Sheikh over peace if the two turned out to be mutually exclusive, have been abandoned by the vast majority of Israelis (including Dayan). Yet with regard to the particularly vulnerable east and north of the country (the West Bank and the Golan), Yigal Allon's 1970 statement appears firmly entrenched with most Israelis: "Defensible borders without peace are preferable to peace without defensible borders."[95] Arguably, demilitarized Sinai provides the (forward) strategic depth and possibilities of nonpreemptive IDF response to an Egyptian violation that Eban's definition postulated. Achievement of either of these requirements in the east and north is a far more complex problem, if it is solvable at all.[96] At this time, intense as the Israeli commitment is, the object of that commitment is yet to be "translated" from general requirements to precise lines on a map.

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[92]See "Security Doctrine in an Era of Change," a symposium with Prof. Y. Dror, Prof. Y. Wallach, and Maj. Gen. A. Yariv, *Skira Hodshit* (Hebrew), 1978, pp. 9-12. Also see numerous articles in *Ma'arachot* in recent years, for example: Prof. S. Amiel, "Conventional Defense in Conditions of Numerical Inferiority," *Ma'arachot*, No. 265, September 1978, pp. 2-6; Brig. Gen. A. Katz, "The 1985 War—the Untaught War," *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-271, October 1979, pp. 62-63; Col. A. Yogev, "Patterns of Future Weapon Systems Development," *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-271, October 1979, pp. 85-86; Col. N., "The Attack Helicopter and the Tasks of Defense," *Ma'arachot*, No. 272, February 1980, pp. 6-9.

[93]Z. Schiff, "Territories and Security" (Hebrew), three-part series in *Ha'aretz*, mid-March 1978. Gur, interviews in *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), December 24, 1976, and *Davar*, April 22, 1977.

[94]Dror, Wallach, and Yariv, *Skira Hodshit*, op. cit. Allon observes that defensible borders also "serve as convenient bases for [Israeli] counterattack," *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., p. 409.

[95]Allon, *The Making* . . ., op. cit., p. 100.

[96]Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., pp. 26-28. Most Israeli leaders insist on retaining at least some military footholds in the West Bank and the Golan Heights. See, for example, interviews in *Davar* (Hebrew) with H. Bar-Lev, June 10, 1975, and M. Gur, April 21, 1978.

OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

The operational elements of a state's strategic doctrine capture its war-making style. The main elements of Israel's operational doctrine are: a strong commitment to the offensive, high regard for the advantages of preemption and speed in conduct of wars, an inclination toward the "indirect approach," exploitation of Israel's advantages in macro-competence, and heavy reliance on air power and tanks within a strong commitment to all-arms,[97] combined-arms[98] operations. These elements of Israel's operational doctrine provide the military means for addressing the constraints and the higher-order political-military considerations outlined in the preceding subsection. They are closely related to one another. Although they may not have been deliberately contrived to constitute a coherent belief system, and although they may not be "taught" to the IDF officers corps as a formal doctrine, nonetheless the elements discussed in this subsection do seem to hang together—both in practice and in theory.

Offense

"Defensive strategy, executed offensively" was the formula Israeli strategists agreed upon in the early days of the state.[99] Israeli strategy has since adhered to this principle both in theory and in practice, more closely than to any other. The maxim of "carrying the battle into the enemy's territory"[100] embodied Israel's solution to the vulnerability of the long 1949 armistice lines and the absence of strategic depth. Defense was judged either impossible or too risky in view of the potentially disastrous consequences of even tactical retreat from those lines.[101] The offensive was therefore seen by the Israelis as not only "the best form of defense," but—for them—the *only* one.

Offensive operations are believed by the IDF to compensate for Israel's overall numerical inferiority. By seizing the operational initiative it can dictate the place and pace of events. The IDF would concentrate forces at chosen points, attain local parity or even superiority, and seek decisive operational victory by swift disruption or destruction of enemy forces at critical junctures. Control of the war is seen as a means of neutralizing a large proportion of the enemy forces by rendering them reactive, always a step behind the action or away from it.[102] Israelis believe that the offensive enables them to seize and

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[97]All arms—cooperation among different services.

[98]Combined arms—cooperation among different branches of the same service.

[99]Maj. Gen. H. Laskov, *Hayom* (Hebrew), May 1, 1968, quoted in Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., pp. 5-6, n. 4.

[100]Handel, op. cit., p. 19. Allon, *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., p. 69.

[101]Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 25. Allon, *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., p. 67. Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., p. 91.

[102]Israel's advantage of interior lines, and the coordination difficulties of her adversaries are best exploited by offensive operations that allow Israel to defeat one adversary at a time. Prussia and later Germany employed a similar strategy for similar reasons. Frederick the Great's preemption of the budding Austrian, French, Russian coalition at the outset of the Seven Years

maintain such control, because it facilitates a mobile, fluid style of warfare that fully exploits the IDF's macro-competence. Ideally, it also denies the Arabs one of their fortes: schematic execution of prepared plans. (On the other hand, it may afford the Arabs opportunity to exercise their other, related, forte: defense.)

It is only through a demonstrated capability for offensive operations that Israel can credibly threaten the decisive operational victories that are central to her deterrence doctrine. The same capability is also seen as the only assured Israeli means of forcing an end to a war, thus reducing its costs.[103] Dayan's memoirs of the 1973 war make clear that the Israeli offensives, first on the Golan (October 11-14), then the more costly one across the Suez Canal (October 15-24), were undertaken out of concern that the war would otherwise continue indefinitely, or end only temporarily, until Egypt and Syria were resupplied and other Arab states joined the effort.[104] The Israelis thus draw the same conclusion from the problem of war-termination as they do from the absence of a defensive margin of safety: Offensive action deep inside enemy territory is seen as the *only* strategic defense option available to the IDF. This does not mean that the IDF expects to be on the offensive on all fronts, and certainly not simultaneously. Rather it seeks to concentrate its efforts against the enemy who poses the greatest immediate threat and vanquish him by means of offensive operations. If there remain further major threats and more stages to the war, the IDF will seek to handle them in the same way.

Finally, a demonstrated offensive capability and inclination may reduce Israel's dependence on external powers. This point deserves further explication, because it relates not only to the preceding remarks about Israel's doctrine, but also to the elements of preemption and prevention discussed below. For example, should the United States seriously pressure Israel by withholding essential supplies of armaments, Israel retains through her offensive doctrine and posture the capability to wage preemptive or preventive war, to forestall the impending deterioration of her relative military position. Israelis have rarely been explicit about this aspect of their offensive doctrine. In one such instance, in late October 1957, then Chief of Staff Dayan expounded in a meeting with IDF officers the view that Israeli military power should be seen as a potential "detonator" of "wider areas" beyond its borders. The Jewish state, he said, would be able to send such widespread tremors that "others would be shaken" and thus have an interest in avoiding the whole "outburst."[105] This is the sort of disruption that the United States, and its ever opportunistic (in Israeli eyes) allies, should probably wish to avoid. It can

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War, the Schlieffen Plan, and the German Blitzkrieg against Poland and France were all efforts to defeat an enemy coalition piecemeal, by means of offensive action.

[103]Tamari, op. cit., p. 14.

[104]Concern that the war might be prolonged, enabling the Arabs' superior resources to come into play in a contest of intense attrition, was uppermost in Israeli minds in October 1973 until they regained the initiative by moving to the attack. See Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 598-601, 609, and Bartov, op. cit., pp. 64, 118, 120-121, 127-128, 159.

[105]Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 355-356.

therefore be counted upon to give them some pause before undertaking policies or measures that might push Israel into a desperate corner.

For the most part, Israeli wartime behavior confirms the hypothesis that the IDF is strongly committed to the offensive. The tremendously successful campaigns of 1956 and 1967 were marked by offensive sweeps at all levels. Where operational offensives have seemed inappropriate, as in the War of Attrition (1969-70), offensive tactics still played a major role. Again in 1973, the crucial turning point in the war, in Israeli eyes, was the successful offensive across the Suez Canal.

The 1973 war, however, actually offers mixed evidence concerning both the Israeli commitment to the offensive and the efficacy of offensive action. Two of Israel's foremost soldiers, Generals Dayan and Tal, actually proposed during the first few days of the war that Israel use the strategic depth afforded by the Sinai and withdraw to a second line of defense at the Milta and Gidi Passes.[106] Even General Sharon, hero of the Canal crossing and one of Israel's most "offensive"-minded generals, is reported to have suggested at a general staff meeting in early 1973 that in a future war it might suffice to destroy the Egyptian formations after they had crossed the Canal, without crossing it in turn.[107]

Whatever the reasons for the Israelis' willingness to entertain defensive ideas, the war itself showed that offensive action was not always appropriate. Some of the worst failures of the war were the dogged armored counterattacks in the Sinai, especially those of October 8 and 9. The more successful offensive of the latter stages of the war (October 15-24) involved extremely high daily casualty rates, even higher than those of October 6-14.[108] The offensive on the Golan had bogged down at the Syrian main line of defense (the Sasa fortifications) by October 14. On the other hand, some of the most remarkable and least costly Israeli successes were the defensive battle of the 7th Armored Brigade in the northern Golan, the devastating ambushes of advancing Egyptian tanks in the Sinai (October 17) and Iraqi tanks on the Golan (October 13), and the huge Sinai tank battle of October 14, which involved mobility but no advance.

While these defensive battles were very successful, they still left the Israelis uneasy. The Arabs did after all have the initiative in these battles, even if it did them little good. The IDF has always been strongly committed to controlling the battle by seizing and holding the initiative, and does not like conceding the initiative under any circumstances. A statement by Brigadier General Avigdor Kahalani, commander of the 77th Battalion, 7th Brigade, in

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[106]Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 59-66, 116-119, 157-160. Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 599, 608. See also "Protocol of Secret Meeting of Defense Minister with Newspaper Editors on the Fourth Day of the War" (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, February 15, 1974.

[107]Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 243.

[108]See n. 76, above. The highest IDF daily casualties were sustained in the Sinai on October 6-8 in a series of disorganized, fragmented, tactical counterattacks. Because these operations were so chaotic, the results of the two and a half days of fighting are not taken to bear on the offense/defense argument.

the 1973 war is so revealing that it deserves replication in full. Kahalani, then a Lt. Col., fought through the first stages of the Syrian assault on the Golan Heights. His unit is credited with perhaps the most brilliant defensive effort of the war.

> Our doctrine believes that the best defense is a good offense. Most of our training was on how to attack. Our ideology preaches that if you attack, you have more of a chance for success. Israeli tacticians teach that you really can't achieve a victory through defense, so it was not emphasized in our service schools. The defense is very dangerous because it gives the initiative to the attacker. We, the defender, are forced to react to all the actions that the attacker makes.[109]

With such ingrained attitudes guiding Israeli soldiers, it is easy to see how ideas about defensive actions could be overwhelmed by operational and political-military considerations that pushed toward offensive action. The Israelis considered it imperative to deprive the Arabs of the victory they might claim on the basis of the initial results of the war. It was also crucial to forestall a slide into an indefinite slugging match in the course of which the Arab world could progressively pitch in, while Israel bled and became totally dependent on American grace.[110] To this end, the IDF had to quickly turn the tables on its adversaries. As for the failed counterattacks in the first days of the war, some of the major protagonists have concluded that they were due to remediable blunders in command, control, and communications; wrong tactics; and deficient force structure.[111]

Today it is clear that the Israelis are paying much more attention to defense than at any time since 1967 and probably earlier. Close attention has been given to defensive fortifications (as distinct from the protective outposts of the Bar-Lev line). The system of area-defense based on fortified civilian settlements has been revived from its post-1967 slump and is apparently undergoing "revolutionary" upgrading.[112] Finally, there has been frequent and extended discussion, over the last few years, of the defensive uses of helicopters and advanced PGM technology.[113] Yet none of this necessarily suggests any more than concern to insure that the initial reverses of 1973 should never recur. Indeed it is instructive that even a major proponent of

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[109]Maj. (U.S. Army) G. Proshch, "Israeli Defense of the Golan" (Interview with Brig. Gen. A. Kahalani), *Military Review*, October 1979, p. 6.

[110]Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 626-628, 685.

[111]Tal, "The Arm. :. Myth and Reality" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, October 20, 1974; Bar-Lev, interviews (Hebrew), *Yediot Aharonot*, September 14, 1975, and October 3, 1976; Sharon, interview (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, January 25, 1974; Maj. Gen. S. Gonen, interview (Hebrew), *Yediot Aharonot*, September 21, 1977; Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 592, 606-607, 626, 683-689.

[112]Z. Schiff, "A Revolution in the Territorial Defense" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, April 14, 1976. Brig. Gen. I. Zeid, "Territorial Defense and Civil Defense in Tomorrow's War" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-1, October 1979, pp. 81-84.

[113]Amiel, "Conventional Defense . . .," op. cit. Also, Amiel, "Defensive Technologies for Small States," in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 17-22. See articles in *Ma'arachot*, No. 270-1, October 1979: "Part Four: Battlefields and Weapons Systems—Characteristics and Developments," and Col. N., "The Attack Helicopter and the Tasks of Defense," op. cit., pp. 6-9.

defensive systems argues the critical need for offensive options as means of "counter-surprise" and war-termination.[114]

Recent statements by Israeli soldiers and soldier-turned-politicians are as emphatic as ever that in the future, as in the past, the IDF will swiftly carry the battle deep into enemy territory.[115] In part this may be deterrent posturing, but as one observer has noted, a significant change in IDF structure may facilitate such action. The standing forces of the IDF have been enlarged to facilitate "prompt counter-offensive operations" or even a "substantial preemptive strike."[116] Of course, under certain political or

[114]Amiel, "Conventional Defense . . .," op. cit., pp. 4-6.

[115]Tal, interview (Hebrew), *Davar*, May 9, 1975. Gur, report of radio interview (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, October 27, 1974. Then Defense Minister E. Weizman is reported to have recently said to U.S. Secretary of Defense H. Brown, quite openly and as a matter of course: "[Surely] you will agree with me that if they fight us on the eastern front we shall not sit there in bunkers and shoot from them at the attacking tanks, but rather [we shall] cross the lines. This is the minimum we have to do, *especially in view of* the quantities of modern weaponry the other side possesses." Z. Schiff, "The Eastern Front: The Threat and the Response," Part II (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, April 13, 1979.

[116]Safran, op. cit., p. 315. See also Tamari, op. cit., p. 15. Before the 1973 war, Israeli standing forces were smaller. There was a gap between the strength of these forces and the strength required for offensive action, due to Israel's reliance upon mobilized reserve units. The Arabs exploited this gap in 1973. Safran argues that the IDF has subsequently attempted to close this gap. Changes in the size of Israeli standing and mobilized forces since the Yom Kippur War support this hypothesis.

Dates	Standing Forces		Mobilized Strength
	Regulars	Conscripts	
1973-1974	30,000	85,000	300,000
1980-1981	44,300	125,300	400,000

Peacetime personnel strength has increased by 50 percent. This has allowed a commensurate increase in the number of fully manned and ready brigades.

Dates	Total	Full Strength Brigades			
		Armored	Inf.	Mech.	Paratr.
1973-1974	7	2	3	—	2
1980-1981	11	5	4	—	2

The increase has been particularly marked in armored brigades, from two to five, a 150 percent improvement.

The increase in the IAF's inventory of front-line fighter-bombers has been over 50 percent. The qualitative improvement due to the (ongoing) purchase of F-15 and F-16 is no less significant.

Dates	F-4	Mirage/Kfir	A-4	F-15	F-16	Others	Total
1973-1974	95	59	160	—	—	18	332
1980-1981	130	110	200	27	67	—	534

military circumstances, offensive options may turn out to be more limited and less attractive than these Israeli decisionmakers currently foresee or hope. But their predilection for the offense gives every appearance of being genuine and firm.[117]

Preemption

Because they believe that the peculiar conditions of the Arab-Israeli conflict confer an offensive advantage, Israeli strategists have long stressed the importance of striking first in the face of a major imminent threat. Writing before the 1967 war, Allon elaborated in detail the central role of the "preemptive counter-offensive" or "anticipatory counter-attack" in Israel's operational doctrine.[118] Like many others in the post-1973 period, Tal asserts that "The 'few' must adopt the principle of delivering the first blow."[119]

Preemption is closely related to the offensive elements in Israel's doctrine. Clearly, one cannot preempt without an offensive capability, although one can have an offensive doctrine and still be willing to forgo preemption—as did Israel in 1973. Preemption serves most of the same functions as the offensive. It immediately transfers the battle to enemy territory. It is of special importance in exploiting Israeli "macro-superiority." Through preemption, the IDF can deny the adversary the use of his predetermined battle plans. He will be forced into a war of improvisation in which the IDF enjoys special advantages. Preemption provides a means to prevent or disrupt the mobilization and concentration of individual and collective Arab forces. Thus the IDF can neutralize the numerical advantage of the enemy coalition. All this may shorten the

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(Data for all the charts are drawn from IISS, *Military Balance, 1973-74*, p. 33, and IISS, *Military Balance, 1980-81*, p. 43.) We have added 67 F-16 and 2 F-15 planes, as widely reported in the press to have been delivered to Israel by the summer of 1981.

Severe economic difficulties have recently forced substantial cuts in the defense budget. At this time neither the precise dimensions nor the practical implementation of these measures have been fully determined, but some reduction in the size of the regular forces appears likely. See Z. Schiff, "Sharon's Plan" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, December 26, 1980, p. 11, and "The Painful Surgery" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, February 6, 1981.

[117]Maj. Gen. Yariv has argued in an article in *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), July 18, 1975, that "the Yom Kippur War proved anew that only offensive moves can be decisive."

Likewise Lt. Gen. Elazar asserted in a review of the October 1973 war that although "In the October War, it was proved once more that defense is the more powerful form of combat, inferior forces, well deployed in defensive position, are able to stop the advance of superior forces. [Nevertheless] this lesson cannot change the old truth that, with defense alone—a war cannot be won. . . . So, in order to win, one must attack, and the sooner the better." "The Yom Kippur War: Military Lessons," in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 249-250. Lt. Gen. M. Gur, who followed Elazar as Chief of Staff, expounded practically identical ideas in the same symposium. Ibid., p. 199. Maj. Gen. A. Adan (*On Both Banks of the Suez*, 1979, pp. 329-330) reaches the same emphatic conclusion, "The enemy can be vanquished only by attack!"

[118]Allon, *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., pp. 69-76.

[119]Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 35.

war and give the superpowers the smallest scope for intervention.[120] In sum, preemption is believed to confer a number of military advantages that improve the possibility of a substantial operational victory for the IDF.

Preemption is of special importance in reinforcing deterrence.[121] Maintaining a reputation for preemption is closely tied to the efficacy of *casus belli* in warning the Arabs to avoid particular actions. Israel's adversaries must be concerned about the possible consequences of moving to a more threatening posture. Such a move, the purpose of which might be simply to force financially costly counter-mobilization on Israel, could cause a war. Hence, Arab states might forgo this stratagem if Israel could make her preemptive inclination credible.

All the foregoing notwithstanding, the principle of preemption is not and never has been an automatic mechanism or iron law for the IDF. In 1960, a chain of events, though not strictly analogous to the later one of 1967, led Egypt to concentrate the bulk of its offensive force in the Sinai. Israel counter-mobilized but did not strike. The crisis was diffused quietly with both armies pulling back to their original positions.[122] Even in 1967 Israel struck nearly three weeks after the Egyptian army began moving into the Sinai and two weeks after it had substantially arrived at its positions and blockaded the Straits of Tiran. Finally, as noted above, on October 6, 1973, the Israeli government rejected Chief of Staff Elazar's recommendation for a last-minute preemptive strike by the IAF despite foolproof warning that the Egyptian and Syrian armies would strike that afternoon.[123] Aside from an ever-present margin of doubt as to the inevitability of war, Israeli leaders have always pondered the potential political costs of preemption very seriously. It was for this reason that Foreign Minister Eban was sent on a tour of friendly capitals in May 1967, as it was overriding concern about American reaction that decided Dayan's and Meir's minds in October 1973.[124]

Yet, just as the military inclination is tempered by political concerns, so too the weight of the latter is conditional on the perceived margin of military safety. Clearly the decision to "absorb" the Arab initiative was no spur of the moment fluke. Indeed, the opposite is apparently closer to the truth: Elazar's request to preempt was the result of his realization that Israel had been caught in the sort of strategic surprise no Israeli had deemed possible. The IDF had assumed it would have at least 48-72 hours advance warning, and

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[120]See Rosen and Indyk, op. cit., for an elaborate analysis of "the temptation to preempt" in a future Arab-Israeli War.

[121]Allon, *Curtain of Sand*, op. cit., p. 77.

[122]Rabin, *Pinkas Sherut*, op. cit., pp. 106-108. Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army*, op. cit., p. 146. Handel, op. cit., p. 47 (Handel mistakenly gives 1962 as the date). See also Weizman, in "Siah Alufim" (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, May 4, 1971.

[123]C. Herzog, *The War of Atonement, October 1973*, 1975, pp. 52-53. Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 9-25. It is unclear, and disputed, how effective such a strike could have been in those circumstances. Dayan claims that it was intended against Syrian airfields only and "even if carried out, it would have had no real influence on the week." *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., p. 576.

[124]Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 575-576. G. Meir, *My Life*, 1975, pp. 436-437.

that it would absorb an Arab first strike in its defensive positions. Only then would it proceed to wipe out the attacking forces, in a counter-offensive.[125] Deployment along "defensible borders" following the 1967 war engendered in the Israelis the feeling that their margin of security was sufficient to warrant consideration of the U.S. reaction over the advantages of preemption.[126]

Whatever the merits of the post-mortem arguments about that decision, the Israelis had clearly miscalculated the effort and cost required to "wipe the attackers out." Appreciation of the value of delivering the "first blow" has clearly risen again.[127] Thus far, though, there appears to be a consensus in the post-1973 debates that the IDF should never leave the government in a situation where preemption is the only option.[128] The flexibility of the preemptive "principle" may be expected to remain, as it has been, significantly proportional to Israel's perceived margin of military security, itself a function of the size and quality of opposing armies, the topography of the borders and the strategic depth they afford, etc. Its application may also be contingent on Israeli assessment of its impact on various parts of the potential Arab coalition. Speaking of the eastern front in 1976, then Chief of Staff M. Gur asked rhetorically: "Are Jordan and Syria an eastern front for all purposes? . . . Or will Jordan participate in the alignment only if Israel attacks? . . . By a wrong act on our part we might add confrontation states to the war, without end."[129] In the wake of the Peace Treaty with Egypt, who has not renounced her mutual defense commitments with other Arab states, Egypt's potential return to an Arab war coalition may constitute another powerful disincentive for Israeli preemption in crisis. On the other hand, the Israelis may believe that Egypt's inclination to participate in any future Arab-Israeli war will be more significantly influenced by the actual course and duration of the war than by the identity of the initiator. Insofar as preemption might contribute to a swift and impressive Israeli victory, it could then help keep Egypt—and others—out of the war.

Closely related to "preemption" is "prevention." Preventive considerations arise when the balance of power begins to shift against a state, and that state can conceive of no means by which it can maintain the balance. "Because I

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[125]Bartov, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 216-219, 255-259. M. Arens, "The First Strike" (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, November 6, 1973. Horowitz, "Israel's Concept . . .," op. cit., p. 14. Maj. Gen. B. Peled, "The Air Force in the Yom Kippur War," in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 239-240. Weizman, *Yours Are the Skies . . .*, op. cit., p. 326. Two years before the war, Israel's foremost military correspondent spoke of "the fact that the IDF will not be the first to open fire [in a future war], that is to say that the opening strike will necessarily be the enemy's. In its present geo-strategic situation, Israel has managed to free itself from its former fears that if it is not she who delivers the first strike it might be vanquished, or be made to pay a very heavy price in casualties." Z. Schiff, "The IDF's Responses to a Possible Attack" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, December 22, 1971. Col. M. Pa'il (IDF Res.), "The Yom Kippur War . . .," op. cit., p. 4.

[126]M. Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis: Israel 1967 and 1973*, 1980, p. 178.

[127]M. Gur, interview in *Davar* (Hebrew), May 4, 1976. Peled, op. cit., p. 155. Arens, op. cit. Gen. I. Tal, interview (Hebrew), *Davar* (weekly supplement), May 9, 1975. Tamari, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[128]See Maj. Gens. Y. Gavish, M. Amit, E. Peled, and Meti Peled in "When Must Israel Strike First?" (Hebrew), *Yediot Aharonot*, September 25, 1974. M. Gur, interview in *Davar* (Hebrew), May 4, 1976.

[129]M. Gur, interview in *Davar* (Hebrew), May 4, 1976.

cannot prevent you from catching up with me, and surpassing me, I will cut you down now, while I have the chance." Israel's 1956 campaign is a good example of a preventive war. Israel's decisionmakers were unsure of their ability to run an arms race against an Egypt that had acquired apparently unlimited access to the arsenals of the Warsaw Pact, which Israel could not hope to match.

It is less often pointed out that the 1967 war involved important preventive considerations. It was not the case that Israel was certain of an Arab attack within the next few days. Rather, Nasser's little victories were leading to greater victories, each of which tilted the balance against Israel both militarily and psychologically. Damages were becoming cumulative. Nasser was rapidly assembling an Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian war coalition. Troops were being mobilized and concentrated. Reinforcements were pouring into Jordan from Egypt and Iraq. The Israeli General Staff reportedly estimated that each passing day of unimpeded Arab mobilization would cost Israel an extra two hundred casualties in the event of war.[130]

Along the psychological dimension, Israeli leaders were concerned that the IDF had lost its "power to deter." At best, that "power" was fast approaching vanishing point, as Nasser proceeded from triumph to triumph, and as the Israeli leaderships' will appeared to waver in the face of a tightening noose. The failure to dissuade the Arabs from the steps they had taken hitherto signalled to the Israelis that their deterrent shield was gone. Even if the Arabs did not plan to strike at that moment, there was nothing to keep them from changing their mind the next moment, or at any other time in the future.[131] The Israelis decided that the process had to be stopped and the power to deter "retrieved."[132] One cannot rule out such calculations in the future, particularly if sudden political shifts should dramatically alter either Israel's access to arms, or the overall strength and cohesion of the Arab coalition. A return to "active status" by Egypt might mark the beginning of a very dangerous period, particularly if it were followed by a sudden influx of Soviet equipment and spare parts from the Soviet Union or Libya.

Speed

For political, economic, and military reasons Israelis have long stressed the importance of speedy operations and short wars.[133] The requirement for speed is often explained by the need to forestall "the anticipated intervention of the great powers."[134] The decisive operational victories required by Israel's deterrent strategy are believed to be contrary to the interest of external

[130]Safran, op. cit., p. 411.
[131]Ibid., p. 409.
[132]See n. 47, above.
[133]Dayan, *Diary* . . ., op. cit., pp. 34-35, 115. Handel, op. cit., p. 66. Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 25.
[134]Tal, op. cit., p. 25.

powers. Hence, Israel must rush to achieve them. In the aftermath of the relatively extended October 1973 war, Israeli military leaders have been emphatic that "lightning wars" are still feasible in the Middle East and will be sought by the IDF in the future.[135] A quick conclusion may forestall Soviet resupply of Israel's adversaries in time to influence the war, and obviate her own requirements for immediate U.S. resupply. The influence of both superpowers is thus further reduced.[136]

Similarly, a speedy victory forestalls the intervention of other Arab states. If the Israelis can win quickly enough, other Arab states will have nobody to reinforce. Indeed, a speedy decisive defeat would not only demonstrate the possible consequences of entry, it would free Israeli resources to concentrate on new targets. Israel's concerted effort on the Syrian front on October 10-14, 1973, which included even the bombing of strategic targets by the IAF, was fueled largely by the hope of knocking Syria out of the war in time to forestall Jordanian and Iraqi intervention and to free up forces for anticipated resurgence of activity in the South (Sinai).[137] The incomplete success of this effort and the relative prolongation of the 1973 war provided painful confirmation of the Israeli fear that indecisive warfare could result in snowballing material, human, and political costs.[138]

Fast-paced military operations are believed to maximize Israel's advantage in macro-competence. As Dayan explained the requirement for speed in 1956:

> From the operational point of view, rapidity in advance is of supreme importance to us, for it will enable us to profit fully from our basic advantage over the Egyptian Army . . . in the handling and behavior of our entire Army and its operational formations, brigade groups, brigades and batallions, as against those of their Egyptian counterparts.[139]

In 1970, Dan Horowitz, a long-time acute student of IDF doctrine, could conclude that these premises had become fundamental to Israel's operational doctrine.[140]

The combination of fast-paced operations that maximize Israel's qualitative advantage, and short wars that forestall Arab mobilization of superior quantitative resources, satisfies the Israeli aversion to "wars of attrition." Between 1969 and 1973 they viewed such warfare as an attempt to draw them into fighting "Arab style" on their adversaries' political, economic, and military terms. The IDF therefore escalated the war in 1969-1970. Subsequently, once the Soviets were out of Egypt, the Israelis threatened that an Egyptian at-

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[135]Tal, interview (Hebrew), *Davar* (weekly supplement), May 9, 1975. Gur, report of radio interview (Hebrew), *Ma'ariv*, October 27, 1974; interview (Hebrew), *Davar*, May 4, 1976.

[136]Gur, interview, *Davar*, May 4, 1976. Tamari, op. cit., p. 16.

[137]See n. 45 and n. 104 above.

[138]In the event of a war with their eastern neighbors in the future, it is quite likely that the same basic reasoning will hold for the Israelis as they look over their shoulder at Egypt: The faster and more convincing the IDF's achievements in the east the less time and incentive Egypt will have to join the fray, and the better prepared the IDF will be if it does.

[139]Dayan, *Diary* . . ., op. cit., p. 35.

[140]Horowitz, "Flexible Responsiveness . . .," op. cit.

tempt to rekindle a static slugging match along the Canal would be met by large-scale crossing by IDF land forces.[141] Five months before the outbreak of the October 1973 war, Chief of Staff Elazar is reported to have asserted in a general staff meeting that "There is nothing worse [for Israel] than a war of attrition in which three hundred Egyptians and four Jews fall each day."[142] While hyperbolic and surely wrong, this statement was probably indicative of a general frame of mind.[143]

In the wake of their traumatic experience in 1973, the Israelis will probably be more sensitive than before to another danger that a war of attrition could pose: It might serve as a cover for large-scale Arab mobilization preliminary to an all-out attack. It should be noted, however, that when the Syrians continued to wage a form of attrition campaign on the Golan following the October 1973 war, the Israelis grudgingly engaged in it for several months without major escalation. Although this could be explained satisfactorily by post-war exhaustion, it should again serve notice that doctrinal "principles" or tendencies are not dogmas.

Indirect Approach

The notion of an "indirect approach" to military operations and tactics is closely associated with the IDF. The term was first coined and exhaustively explicated in the interwar period by the British soldier and military commentator B. H. Liddell-Hart.[144] The indirect approach calls for the exploitation of the *line of least resistance,* or *the line of least expectation,* in military operations. One tenet, for example, is that crossing supposedly impassable terrain is infinitely preferable to crossing heavily defended ground. Another would be that flanking or envelopment operations are infinitely preferable to frontal assaults. It is easy to see that Liddell-Hart was reacting against the carnage of World War I, and the mindless repetition of frontal assaults that caused this carnage. Indeed, this is revealed by much of his interwar writing.

Students and "practitioners" of Israeli doctrine have explicitly acknowl-

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[141]Bar-Lev, interviews (Hebrew), *La-Merchav,* February 5, 1971, and *Davar,* August 3, 1973. Z. Schiff, "The IDF's Responses to a Possible Attack" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz,* December 22, 1971.

[142]Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 257.

[143]Dayan's reasoning during the opening days of the 1973 war, as he expounded it to Cabinet colleagues, vividly illustrates this frame of mind as well as the integrated manner in which Israeli strategists approach the issues of speed dependence, attrition, and victory in their large-scale wars: "If we do not achieve a decision, our strength will be whittled away and we will be left without sufficient military force in the middle of the campaign. The Arabs possess great staying power. There are 70-80 million Arabs and we are fewer than three million. In their armies there are about one million soldiers, the USSR supplies them with all the arms they need. They dispose of vast financial resources. Aside from the Arab states currently fighting, the others too—Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, etc.—are ready to join. We have turned to the U.S. and urgently requested additional arms—especially tanks and planes—but who knows whether we will receive these weapons or when they will arrive. And in any case, no one will fight for us." Dayan, *Avnei Derech,* op. cit., p. 601.

[144]B. H. Liddell-Hart, *Strategy,* 1967.

edged Liddell-Hart's influence.[145] Brian Bond, perhaps the foremost current student of Liddell-Hart's thinking, has written the most careful analysis of his direct influence on Israeli doctrine. He has concluded that only a few of Israel's early commanders were directly exposed to much of Liddell-Hart's work. These men, most notably Yigael Yadin and Haim Laskov, passed their knowledge on to many of Israel's most famous commanders, including for example, Yitzhak Rabin. All of this exposure took place before 1948. After the creation of the state of Israel, Liddell-Hart's ideas and some of his writings seem to have flowed into the officer training programs of the IDF by way of these early senior officers. Bond's overall conclusion is that "Liddell-Hart did indeed exercise a considerable influence on Israeli military theory and practice."[146] To the present day, articles detailing Israel's application of the indirect approach in this battle, or that campaign, are grist for the mills of military journals.

In terms of the other elements of Israel's strategic doctrine it is easy to see the attractiveness of a principle such as the "indirect approach." Arguably, had Liddell-Hart not invented it, the Israelis would have. The indirect approach provided a tactical formula for the under-armed troops of the Haganah and the War of Independence to overcome their more heavily armed adversaries. Subsequently, it provided a formula for offsetting the adversary's quantitative superiority. The indirect approach provides an additional device for exploiting Israel's advantage in managerial competence. Attacks planned according to the principle are sure to upset military organizations unskilled at improvisation. By providing a theoretical justification for bypassing frontal assaults and attrition battles, the indirect approach encourages Israel's soldiers to find operational methods that both achieve important objectives and reduce casualties. One lesson the Israelis draw from the 1973 war is that insufficient attention was paid to some forms of the "indirect approach." In one traditional form, night-fighting, Israeli performance declined markedly compared to the IDF's 1967-73 exploits.[147] Arab night-fighting equipment and tactics surprised the IDF in 1973. Israeli efforts to recover and develop their night-fighting competence are one of the many ways that the indirect approach is receiving increased attention.[148] More careful planning for the use of commandos, heliborne infantry, and paratroopers is also to be expected, possibly on a significantly increased scale.

It is important to remember, however, that the principle is not etched in

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[145]B. Bond, "Liddell-Hart's Influence on Israeli Military Theory and Practice," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, V. 121, June 1976, pp. 83-89, condensed from a chapter in his book "Liddell-Hart: A Study of His Military Thought." Handel, op. cit., p. 67. Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 63-65.

[146]Bond, op. cit., p. 88.

[147]Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 370-371. Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 144-145, 152, 201, 311. Herzog, op. cit., p. 271.

[148]The Israelis expect that improvements in their tank fleet, and especially the design of the Israeli-made "Merkava" (chariot), will enable them to operate their armor on a large scale at night. See Prof. Col. (Res.) Y. Vallach, "The Omimpotent Tank," *Ma'arachot*, No. 276-277, October-November 1980, p. 26.

stone. The IDF has in the past and probably will in the future make frontal assaults against objectives of major operational or strategic importance if it perceives no speedy alternative.[149] One suspects that Liddell-Hart himself would order such attacks under certain circumstances. The possibilitites for indirect approach depend heavily on the nature of the battlefield. Note that the outstanding cases of such operations by the Israelis have occurred mostly in the relative expanse of their southern (Egyptian) front,[150] and far less in the more compact and saturated Golan Heights.[151] Indeed, in 1973 the Israelis found it altogether impossible to carry out large-scale flanking and envelopment operations during their offensive on the Golan. Attempts to sweep the Second Egyptian Army from its flanks and "roll" it on its side failed too (on October 8 and 9). The final sweep on the West Bank of the Suez Canal, which effectively ended the war, first required a grueling effort to break through and across the Canal. The subsequent sweep southward (to encircle the Third Egyptian Army) was slower than expected, and Gen. Sharon's northern thrust bogged down far short of its objectives. The IDF was spread out thinly on two distant fronts and strained to the limit. The observations of a concerned Israeli general are worth quoting at length:

> It appears that in the Yom Kippur War the ratio [of forces to territory] was such that the forces on both sides saturated the area. This rendered us incapable of enveloping and flanking, and as a result most of the battles were frontal and accompanied by a great deal of attrition. In the three previous wars, the ratio of forces to territory made it possible to carry out envelopment and flanking and to avoid—granted not everywhere or in every sector—extended battles of high attrition.... In October 1973 it was necessary to break through the enemy's thick formations directly and in depth in order to create freedom of maneuver in his rear, and for that we lacked [sufficient] forces. On the other hand, when we did do so, following completion of the defensive stage, we lacked [sufficient] forces to achieve a decisive result. Flanking of the whole of the enemy's deployments by air or sea so as to bring about a general change of the situation at the front, required forces and formations configured especially for such tasks ... but the cost of the forces and means for this purpose was impossible [then] ... and it is doubtful whether such resorces are available to us today.[152]

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[149]Viz. the assaults by the Golani Brigade against Syrian fortifications in 1967, and the retaking of the high point of Mt. Hermon in 1973. Likewise, the tank and paratroop assaults on the "Chinese Farm" in 1973 were judged by the Israelis to be crucial to secure access routes for the Canal crossing, though of no intrinsic value in themselves.

[150]The 1957 and 1967 campaigns in the Sinai were replete with instances of indirect approach at all operational levels. The thrust into mid-Sinai by the 7th Brigade in 1956, the trek by Brig. Gen. Yoffe's Division through supposedly "impassable" dunes in 1967, and the envelopment of the Third Egyptian Army in 1973 were perhaps the most notable.

[151]One might argue that the 1967 assault on the Golan did include some elements of indirect approach. The IDF chose some of the toughest terrain in the Golan for its main axis of advance, as it was apparently the line of "least expectation" and hence less heavily defended. See Dupuy, op. cit., p. 321, and Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., p. 277.

[152]Tamari, op. cit., pp. 12, 15, 16.

One central lesson the Israelis have drawn from this predicament is the critical need for larger forces and additional, highly mobile combat formations to give the IDF more staying power and longer reach, as well as the capacity to utilize a mobile reserve and choose the points of main effort.[153]

Since 1973, the Golan front has been fortified in depth even further on both sides. This probably increases the operational attractiveness for the IDF of an end-run through northern Jordan, to envelop the Syrian Army on the Golan from the flank and rear or else a thrust through eastern Lebanon onto the Beirut-Damascus highway. Alternatively, the Israelis may try to devise ingenious all-arms, combined-arms operations, perhaps relying on airborne units to surprise the Syrians on the Golan itself. The demilitarization of the Sinai, on the other hand, may set the stage for mobile warfare on that front, in the event of an Egyptian thrust toward Israel.

Exploitation of Macro-Competence

We have shown how many of the operational elements of Israeli strategic doctrine help exploit Israel's advantage in macro-competence. This is a general tendency of Israeli operational doctrine. There are undoubtedly many principles and particular stratagems not identified in this report that the IDF could employ to exploit its superior "battle-management" capability. As examples cited in this report show, the Israelis are keenly aware of this capability. In explaining Israel's ultimate success in the 1973 war, Tal was quick to credit Israel's "qualitative" or "professional superiority."

> But from the minute the first shot was fired, their [the Arabs'] helplessness in conducting the war at every echelon was exposed. Our forces were revealed in their full superiority as soldier against soldier, tank against tank, plane against plane, ship against ship, and commander against commander.[154]

Dan Horowitz is perhaps the foremost proponent of the view that the IDF has elevated the exploitation of its professional competence to an operational principle.[155] He argues that the Israeli Army is especially good at decentralized operations. Such operations stress the initiative of low-level commanders—down to battalion and even company level. Israeli officers are trained to improvise on the spot, to exploit developing opportunities, and to take initiative without necessarily waiting for higher authority's approval. This of course can cause problems in the control and coordination of large operations. However, an operational style or plan that maximizes the fluidity and confusion of the battle places an even greater strain on the less-flexible Arab command structure. In Horowitz's words, such a strategy "involves a sacrifice of efficiency in order to obtain more effectiveness in a relational

[153]Ibid., p. 15.
[154]Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., p. 32.
[155]Horowitz, "Flexible Responsiveness . . .," op. cit.

context."[156] Some have concluded that this freewheeling style of warfare went too far during the 1973 war, causing major difficulties for the IDF. At the same time, the Arab command structure never actually folded up as it did in 1967. Even so, the Israeli crossing of the Canal does seem to be consistent with the overall tendency to exploit Israel's macro-competence. The relatively slow reaction of the Egyptians may provide some vindication for the proposition that the differences in command capability are real and should always be exploited.

Some Israeli and independent observers believe that the increasing complexity and prospective "molecularization" of the modern battlefield into smaller units (due to the lethality and mobility of modern weaponry) favor the IDF. Commanding these units will require high initiative from relatively junior commanders. Controlling these units will require great skill on the part of higher-level commanders. The Israelis are expected to excel in this style of warfare.[157] While this seems to us a reasonable expectation in itself, given Israeli advantages in command, control, and communications, much depends on how fluid the battlefield can be kept. If land warfare should grind down in a future war to a relatively slow moving or even static exchange in a battlefield saturated with fortifications, men, and materiel, then these Israeli advantages may be substantially neutralized.[158] Arab achievements in 1973 were largely due to their success in denying the Israelis their predilection for swift, mobile warfare. This, in turn, was partly due to the saturation of the battlefield with materiel and men (Egypt) or fortifications (Syria). The war was thus prolonged and high attrition rates were inflicted on the Israelis.

All-Arms, Combined-Arms

Military theorists have long believed that cooperation among different services and among service branches can greatly improve the combat effectiveness of an armed force. The details of such cooperation are complex, and often a source of great debate. A careful and thorough discussion of such issues within the context of Israeli strategic doctrine is beyond the scope of this report, but will be addressed in a later study. Here, only a few *critical* elements of Israeli all-arms, combined-arms thinking will be introduced.

From the aftermath of the 1956 war to this day, the IAF and the Armored Corps,[159] in that order, have been the centerpieces of the IDF, consumers of over three-fourths of its budget and pivots of its operational doctrine. Over the

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[156]Ibid., p. 15.

[157]Tamir, "Quality vs. Quantity," op. cit., pp. 9, 38. Pascal et al., op. cit., pp. 51-52. S. J. Rosen, "What the Next Arab-Israeli War Might Look Like," *International Security*, Spring 1978, pp. 163-166.

[158]This in turn may contribute to Israel's penchant for preemption, as the IDF may be particularly reluctant to allow the enemy an opportunity to organize, and anxious to make the most of the disruptive effects of a first strike.

[159]The Israeli Armored Corps includes tanks and mechanized infantry, the former being by far the predominant element.

years there have been variations in their precise roles and mode of operation. But even in the wake of the 1973 war that tarnished them, both the IAF and the Armored Corps clearly remain the cutting edge and backbone of the IDF.[160]

The Air Force performs a critical function in Israeli strategic doctrine: "control of the air." Israel is highly dependent on mobilized army reserves for the conduct of defensive operations of any duration, and counter-offensive operations of any magnitude. It is critical to the security of the state that mobilization be as timely and efficient as possible. If mobilization were greatly impeded by aerial interdiction, disaster could result. Thus, the IAF must, at a minimum, control the air space over Israel and over the battle area. Depending on the effectiveness credited to Arab aerial interdiction, it may not be hyperbole to say that the Israeli Army owes its life to the IAF's air defense capability. This point cannot be overstressed and helps explain why the Air Force enjoys such privileged access to human and material resources. "Control of the air" can be expected to remain a high priority of Israeli strategic doctrine. Anything that might jeopardize this control will be an object of grave concern. No measures taken to ensure this control should come as a surprise.

With the dramatic present and foreseeable increase in the force-projection capabilities of the more distant Arab countries,[161] interdiction of such forces on their way to the front will probably assume increasing importance in Israeli strategy. The IAF's long reach casts it naturally for this role. This long reach also adds a unique dimension to Israel's deterrent posture. Even before these developments, and apart from them, the IAF had come to play a pivotal role in Israeli deterrence. Following its extraordinary performance in 1967 and 1969-1970, the IAF's superiority over its Arab counterparts became the most awesome symbol of Israel's qualitative advantage. It weighed heavily on Egyptian planning and operations in 1973,[162] and—ironically—contributed

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[160]The IAF apparently continues to receive about 50 percent of the defense budget, as it did before the 1973 war. Although the share of the Armored Corps has probably shrunk in the last few years (down from about 30 percent of the budget) as the other land elements were brought up to par, the IDF has increased its tank inventory by over 50 percent since 1973 to more than 3,000 units (see *The Military Balance 1980-1981*, IISS, London, p. 43). The IDF has also invested heavily in upgrading its existing fleet of tanks, as well as the design and production of an original and advanced main battle tank: the "Merkava."

[161]Most importantly today Iraq, though the Israelis are watching the increase in Saudi and Libyan capabilities with apprehension. If Egypt were to actively participate in a future Arab-Israeli war, its army would have to be "projected" across the Sinai.

[162]Heikal writes of "the legend of Israeli invincibility in the air" between 1967 and 1973, that it "was of itself an effective deterrent," *The Road to Ramadan*, op. cit., p. 61. The Egyptians tailored their operational objectives and rate of advance in 1973 to the availability at each point of massive air defense. They adhered to this overriding imperative with only a few exceptions. See Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 481-483; Safran, op. cit., p. 280; Badri et al., op. cit., pp. 83, 90. Some Egyptian, Israeli, and other observers have argued that excessive caution prevented the Egyptians from advancing to the Mitle and Gidi Passes and Abu Rudeis on October 9 in full exploitation of their initial success. See Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, op. cit., pp. 215-220, 241; Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 347-348, 352; Pascal et al., op. cit., p. 41.

The decision by King Hussein of Jordan not to open up the Jordanian-Israeli front (but rather to commit limited forces for the *Syrian* front) was due, he explained to the Egyptians, to his

directly to Israel's complacency and surprise.[163] Although the 1973 war tarnished the myth of the IAF's magical effectiveness (though not of its superiority over Arab air forces), the Israelis apparently continue to consider the IAF a particularly potent deterrent.[164]

The air force is singularly suited for Israel's conditions because of its readiness, flexibility, versatility, capital intensity, and competence. Given its active and alert status (28,000 out of 37,000 are regular army soldiers), it is both the major quick-reaction force of a largely reservist army and the ideal weapon for surprise attack or preemption. Its mobility and firepower make it the major strategic reserve of the IDF, swiftest to concentrate or shift concentration from front to front (viz. 1967 and 1973). Moreover, control of Israeli airspace by the capital-intensive IAF obviates the need to divert scarce manpower to ground-to-air defense (in comparison, Egypt assigns one-fifth or more of its active forces to ground-based defense).[165] Unlike a ground-based air defense, it can also be turned to offensive tasks (of theatre and battlefield interdiction and occasional close support, or bombing of strategic targets). Finally, the air force makes maximal use of Israel's advantages in micro- and macro-competence.[166] The Israelis are vastly superior to their adversaries in the maintenance, operation, and coordination of aircraft. The Israelis believe that the tank-aircraft combination maximizes both the mobility and the shock power of the IDF allowing for the swift, disruptive, indirect, and capital-intensive offense that they deem essential for "decisive" victory.[167]

Although the Israelis have quite consistently over the past 20 years sought and expected these dividends from their aircraft and tanks, there have been significant changes in their operational approach and experience. The elegant successes of 1967 led to even greater reliance on the two than before. During the 1969-70 War of Attrition, the IAF was employed in the role of "flying artillery" (Israeli term). During the years 1970-73 the Israeli High Command apparently relied on the IAF to both wipe out the enemy antiaircraft system and to contribute decisively to the thwarting of his ground attack during the first 48 hours of any war that might catch Israel by surprise[168] (an event then

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country's lack of air-defenses. See Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, op. cit., p. 222. This may not have been the whole, or the only reason, but it surely was a major consideration. See Dupuy, op. cit., p. 531.

[163]Z. Schiff, "The Main Chunk in the Defense Budget" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, December 16, 1976; Herzog, op. cit., pp. 41-43; Safran, op. cit., pp. 282-283; The Insight Team of the *London Sunday Times*, *The Yom Kippur War*, p. 95.

[164]This explains in part Israeli determination to acquire the most advanced equipment even if, as with the F-15 air-superiority fighter, they cannot afford it in large numbers. Hence also their heightened concern as the Arabs acquire increasing quantities of the latest western weaponry. Such purchases threaten to narrow the qualitative gap, and—perhaps equally grave from the Israeli perspective—they may chip away at the image of IAF superiority. See Z. Schiff, "Who Needs F-15?" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, December 14, 1976; "How to Guarantee Clean Skies" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, July 24, 1978; and "Qualitative Gap in Question" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, September 21, 1979.

[165]*The Military Balance*, 1979-1980, p. 40. B. Peled, in Williams (ed.), op. cit., p. 254.

[166]Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., p. 120.

[167]Tamari, op. cit., pp. 14, 16.

[168]Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, op. cit., pp. 570, 684. Bartov, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 257. Weizman, *Yours*

considered extremely unlikely). This expectation seems to have contributed substantially to the complacency with which the Israelis regarded the threat posed by the standing Egyptian and Syrian armies and to Dayan's and Meir's refusal to authorize an aerial first strike on October 6.[169]

The Armored Corps had not only doubled its inventory of tanks between 1967 and 1973, but because the tank provided battlefield mobility far in excess of what infantry or artillery could then achieve, the IDF came to depend on nearly autonomous tank formations, backed by infantry and artillery only when necessary. The assumption seems to have been that careful combined arms integration would be the exception rather than the rule.

The setbacks of 1973 initially caused observers to raise fundamental questions about the future viability and effectiveness of the attack plane and the tank. Upon close study the Israelis have apparently concluded that an evolutionary adjustment is necessary in the nature of the tasks assigned to aircraft and tanks and in their mode of operation. They saw no grounds for revolutionary change in the relative preeminence of those two main systems.[170]

The Israelis have drawn two sets of conclusions. First—the IAF cannot be effectively used as jack-of-all-trades.[171] The land forces must therefore be ready to achieve their battlefield goals largely independently of close air support[172]. Indeed, the IAF's support effectiveness may depend in some

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Are the Skies . . ., op. cit., pp. 326-329. See also Maj. Gen. S. Gonen, in Z. Schiff, "The Air-Force Facing the 80's, Part II" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, December 16, 1976.

[169]Meir, op. cit., p. 426.

[170]Tamari, op. cit., p. 14, observes that development and acquisition of modern tanks has been *accelerated* in both the West and the East following the 1973 war.

Generals Tal, Gonen, and others of the IDF ground forces are known to have argued in the years following the 1973 war for a far-reaching redefinition and reduction of the role of the Air Force and a corresponding reduction in its size and share of resources (see, for example, Z. Schiff, "The Air Force Facing the 80's, Part II" (Hebrew), *Ha'aretz*, December 16, 1976, p. 9). Clearly, they have not carried the day on this issue.

[171]Elazar, in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 248-249.

[172]Ibid. Peled, in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 255-257. Gonen, quoted in Schiff, "The Air Force . . .," op. cit. Tal, "Israel's Defense Doctrine . . .," op. cit., pp. 28, 37.

The question of close air support remains controversial. The attrition experienced on such missions during the 1973 war is taken to have been a major setback for the *supposedly* close-support-oriented IAF. The effectiveness of IAF antiarmor operations in 1973 has also been questioned. It is necessary to put this close-support debate into perspective. General Peled, commander of the IAF during the 1973 war, has remarked that close support, defined as the temporary attachment of air units to the operational control of a ground commander at his request, has rarely been practiced by the IAF. In Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 255-257, Peled conceded that this is likely to be an even rarer occurrence in the future.

Histories of the 1967 war, the one war in which one would expect to find relatively extensive close support, tend to confirm Peled's statement. Two kinds of operations stand out: the preemption against Arab air forces on the ground; theatre and battlefield interdiction of both reinforcing and retreating Arab ground formations. Of secondary but real importance were "softening up" strikes against prepared defensive positions. Only in a small number of cases do accounts of the 1967 war reveal anything like "close support." The exceptions seem to occur in some of the West Bank battles. (Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 311-312.) In these few cases close support appears to have been of critical value in saving outnumbered ground formations.

A comparison of what seems to have been IAF behavior in 1967 with the lessons apparently drawn from 1973 shows more evolution than revolution. Greater caution regarding close support is likely. Yet, in critical situations, it probably will be attempted. The commitment to theatre interdiction may actually increase. A diminished commitment to battlefield interdiction is plaus-

measure on the ability of the land forces to punch holes and clear paths through enemy antiaircraft networks, as they did on the West Bank of the Suez Canal during the last week of the 1973 war.[173] Second—combined arms operations by land forces must receive greater attention, even as the tank retains a somewhat diminished preeminence.[174] In fact, as the older tanks are equipped for night-fighting and the "Merkava" introduced, the Israelis may plan to undertake large-scale combined-arms operations round the clock.[175] The Infantry, Artillery, and Engineering Corps have all received major infusions of modern equipment (often not the case until 1973). Plans are under way for the most far-reaching reorganization of the IDF since the early 1950s. Its centerpiece will be a "Field Forces Headquarters" with professional responsibility (but not a combat role) for coordinated buildup, training, and doctrinal development of all four Corps (Armor, Artillery, Engineering, and Infantry).[176] Recent improvements in the mobility and protection of Israeli infantry and artillery must be seen as efforts to bring these arms up to "tank" standards, so that these arms can best complement the still decisive firepower-protection-mobility attributes of the tank.

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ible. The clearest evidence suggesting less IDF overall reliance on the IAF for close support and battlefield interdiction is the rather striking increase in artillery holdings of all types since 1973—particularly "long" 155mm and 175mm guns. It is also worth noting that defense of Israeli airspace may, as in 1973, be more a function of air-to-air combat than attacks on the hardened and heavily defended Arab airfields.

[173]Luttwak and Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 385-386. Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 551-553.

[174]Elazar in Williams (ed.), op. cit., pp. 248-249. Adan, op. cit., p. 329. Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 486-489. Maj. Gen. Moshe Peled (then Commander of the IDF Armored Corps), "The Armor After the War" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot,* No. 251-2, October 1976, p. 12. Brig. Gen. M. Vilnai, "The Infantry in the Eighties" (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot,* No. 270-1, October 1979, pp. 72-74. Brig. Gen. A. Bar-David (Hebrew), *Ma'arachot,* No. 270-1, October 1979, pp. 75-77.

[175]Vallach, op. cit.

[176]Since this was written in August 1980, these plans for the reorganization of the IDF have apparently been put in abeyance due to a mix of economic constraints and continuing professional debates.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Israeli strategic doctrine is a response to a special set of threats and constraints, assets and opportunities. These are inherent in the nature and intensity of the conflict, its geographical conditions, the sociopolitical characteristics of the adversaries, the technology of modern conventional warfare, and the intrusion of superpower patronage and rivalry.

While many of the particular aspects of Israeli strategic doctrine emerged early and logically from certain now long-standing circumstances of the Arab-Israeli conflict, others have evolved more slowly as a response to changing circumstances. Direct military experience in the 1956 war, and in the many skirmishes that followed, produced the relatively modern and seasoned armed force that triumphed in 1967. Doctrinally, this force changed but little between 1967 and 1973, and appears to have changed in only an evolutionary way since then. Neither experience nor new technology have produced any strategic revolutions.

New political facts, such as the peace with Egypt, do not seem to have fundamentally affected strategic doctrine either. Perhaps, if and as more experience is gained with the Egyptian peace, Israeli strategic doctrine may change in more decisive ways. On the other hand, the current situation notwithstanding, the possible emergence of a more heavily armed and politically cohesive "Eastern Front" could cancel out whatever enhanced sense of security might result from the peace with Egypt. Also, Egypt remains a potential adversary in Israeli eyes, even if a less likely one than in the past. Hence, the strategic doctrine of the future may remain much as it is today.

We have shown at various points in this report how Israeli strategic doctrine has adapted and evolved in response to particular changes in military geography, military technology, and international politics. At the same time, our analysis shows a certain constancy in Israeli doctrine. This constancy reflects enduring constraints and problems: the quantitative advantage in manpower and wealth held by the Arabs, the fact that Israel is geographically small and encircled, and the intervention of the superpowers to keep the military conflict within bounds that seem to prohibit *politically decisive* military victories. At the same time, in spite of their frequent intervention, neither superpower has *guaranteed* the national survival of its clients, and it is unlikely that either side would or could rely on such guarantees if they were given.

The sum total of these constraints has produced an operationally offensive Israeli strategic doctrine that, metaphorically, resembles nothing so much as a coiled spring. It has made the IDF an extremely potent and dangerous adversary. These constraints can be expected to exert an important continuing influence on Israeli strategic doctrine. Its *fundamentals* are unlikely to

change very much, except perhaps under the impact of nuclear weapons, if and when they are introduced into the region.

Doctrine is not dogma, however, and Israeli strategic doctrine will probably adapt and evolve in response to future developments, much as it has in the past. At the same time one must remember that the strategic doctrine very nearly failed catastrophically in 1973, as a result of failure to adapt and innovate so as to take account of its own weaknesses and the adversaries' progress in exploiting those weaknesses. One expects that the IDF will not in the future succumb to such lethargy. The lessons of 1973 have been carefully evaluated and absorbed, including perhaps the biggest lesson of all: Israeli strategic doctrine is not foolproof.

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